

GLOSSARY OF FIRE & EMS TERMINOLOGY

200 FOOT: Slang term used to designate the typical 200' 1 ¼" diameter attack hose.

10-65: Police Assistance: [Example: Engine 822 to Fairfax, request 10-65]. (Pronounced Ten Sixty Five).

ABANDONMENT: Abandonment occurs when an emergency responder begins treatment of a patient, and then leaves the patient or discontinues treatment prior to the arrival of an equally or higher trained responder.

ABRASION: A scrape or brush of the skin usually making it reddish in color and resulting in minor capillary bleeding.

ABSORBENT: Material used to contain or absorb chemical leaks or spills (including gasoline and oil), grainy, sand-like substances, such as kitty litter.

ACCIDENT: The result of a series of events and conditions that lead to an unsafe situation resulting in injury and/or property damage.

ACCIDENTAL ALARM: Typically a fire, smoke detector, or water-flow alarm that has been activated due to water or power surges, sometimes they are accidentally pulled or tripped, and be classified as "good intent" calls, meaning that someone has seen some steam, and thinking it was smoke, pulled the alarm.

ACCIDENT CHAIN: A series of events or conditions that can lead to or have led to an accident. These events and conditions are typically classified into five areas: environment, human factors, equipment, events, and injury.

ACCIDENT WITH INJURY: Dispatch phrase to denote a vehicle accident with an injury requiring fire department assistance.

Acute: (1) A quick one-time exposure to a chemical. (2) Sudden onset of symptoms.

ADAPTER: Device that adapts or changes one type of hose thread to another, allowing connection of two different lines. Examples could be a male to male or a female to female. It can also be used to describe a connection between different types of thread such as a "storz to 2 ½" adapter."

ADMINISTRATIVE WARRANT: An order issued by a magistrate that grants authority for fire personnel to enter private property for the purpose of conducting a fire prevention inspection.

AERIAL: Mechanically operated turntable ladder attached to a ladder truck and manufactured in various lengths, also refers to the complete aerial ladder truck.

AERIAL APPARATUS: fire apparatus using mounted ladders and other devices for reaching areas beyond the length of ground ladders. See "truck".

AIR BAGS: Rubber, steel reinforced bags used for lifting extremely heavy objects, in the course of victim extrication, either low pressure or high pressure, operated from SCBA bottles or air compressors carried on rescue squads.

AIRCARE: Refers to the Medivac helicopter operated by Fairfax Hospital's INOVA Systems, known as Aircare 1.

AIR SHORES: Air-powered, pneumatic jacks, used in trench rescue operations, used to separate plywood or wood when forming two walls. Also called Pneumatic Shores.

ALARM: (1) Any audible or visible signal indicating the existence of a fire or emergency requiring response and emergency action by the Fire Department.

(2) A report of a fire.

(3) A set of units called to the scene of an incident in pre-determined groupings. For example, a "First Alarm" for a house fire would be 4 Engines, 1 Truck, 1 Rescue Company, 1 EMS Unit, 1 Battalion Chief, 1 EMS Supervisor whereas a "Second Alarm" on a house fire would consist of 3 additional engines, 1 additional truck, Safety Officer, an air and light unit, an additional EMS unit, and additional supervisors.

ALLERGIC REACTION: The body's reactions to a substance to which there is an allergy.

ALTERNATE CHANNEL: Radio channel not normally used for routine radio traffic, specifically assigned to an incident for fireground and command communications.

An "alternate channel" can also be requested for routine or administrative communications between units or to dispatch so as to not tie up the main radio channel.

AMBULANCE: Radio designation for a basic life support vehicle with patient transport capabilities.

AMPUTATION: Occurs when part of the body is severed completely as a result of an injury.

ANCHOR POINT: (1) A safe location from which to begin line construction on a wildland fire.

(2) An object in which to secure a rope for a rope rescue or lowering operation.

ANTHRAX: A biological material that is naturally occurring and is severely toxic to humans. It is commonly used in hoax incidents.

APPARATUS: Motor-driven fire truck or collective group of such trucks, engines, ladder trucks, rescues, etc.

AQUEOUS FILM-FORMING FOAM (AFFF): Synthetic foam that as it breaks down forms an aqueous layer or film over a flammable liquid.

ARSON: A malicious fire or fires set intentionally by humans for vengeance or profit.

ARTERIAL BLEEDING: Bleeding from an artery.

ARTERIES: The blood vessels, or tubes, within the body that carry blood rich with oxygen and nutrients away from the hearts.

ASPHYXIATION: Condition that causes death due to lack of oxygen or an excessive amount of carbon monoxide or other gases in the blood.

ASSUMING COMMAND: Phrase used by the second arriving engine, an EMS supervisor, or a chief officer, denotes they are taking command of the incident from the first arriving officer. Can also be used as a command to a later arriving unit for them to “assume command”

ATTACK LINES: Hose lines carried on apparatus, to put water on, or “attack” fires, typically 1 ¾ or 2 ½ inches in diameter. Attack lines are typically “pulled” from the apparatus.

AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM: A system of devices that will activate when exposed to fire, connected to a piping system that will supply water to control the fire. Typically, an automatic sprinkler system is also supported by firefighters when they arrive on the scene.

AVULSION: An injury where a part of the skin is torn away, but still attached, leaving a flap or loose area hanging

BACKDRAFT: An extremely dangerous fire condition in a structure that has had all its oxygen content severely depleted due to an intense fire. The fire charges the structure with smoke and creates an incredible pressure of heat, smoke, and gases. As this pressure vents through cracks in walls, windows, doors, or eaves, it sucks in small amounts of fresh air, giving the visible impression that the structure is breathing. Unless carefully ventilated, the flammable smoke and gases can ignite with explosive force when any large amount of fresh air is introduced.

BACK-IT-DOWN: An instruction from one engine driver to another or from a hoseline crew to the engine driver to reduce the amount of pressure that is being pumped to that pumper or hoseline.

BANK DOWN: A condition in which the heat, smoke, and fire gases have reached the uppermost level in a compartment and, instead of continuing up, begin to push down from the ceiling toward the floor.

BATTALION CHIEF: Term is universal and responsibilities may vary from region to region. In Fairfax County, a Battalion Chief is a chief and incident supervisor/commander that has the responsibility for covering a geographical area that encompasses 5 – 7 stations, and managing the staffing assigned to those stations.

BELTWAY: Term referring to those portions of I495 and I95 that circle the District of Columbia, also referred to as the Capital Beltway.

BIOLOGICAL AGENTS: Microorganisms that cause disease in humans, plants, and animals; they also cause the victim's health to deteriorate. Biological agents have been designed for warfare purposes.

BLACK TAG: See Grey Tag

BLISTER AGENTS: A group of chemical agents that causes blistering and irritation of the skin.

BLITZ LINE: 200' 2½" attack line. Used to deliver a large amount of water quickly.

BLOOD AGENTS: Chemicals that affect the body's ability to use oxygen. If they prevent the body from using oxygen, fatalities result.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS: Pathogenic microorganisms that present in human blood and can cause disease in humans.

BOAT: Water craft used for water-related rescue, or other varied services deemed necessary.

BODY SUBSTANCE ISOLATION PRECAUTIONS: A set of precautions for emergency responders designed to protect exposure to any body fluid or substance.

BOILING LIQUID EXPANDING VAPOR EXPLOSION (BLEVE): Pronounced BLEV-E Describes the rupture of a container when a confined liquid boils and creates a vapor pressure that exceeds the container's ability to hold it.

BOOSTER LINE: Water supply line on an engine that can be quickly charged, consisting of small diameter hose and a nozzle.

BOX: (1) Geographical area assigned to a fire department for protection (2) Public or private fire alarm box. Also used in conjunction with the “Fill the box,” referring to the full assignment normally given for the type of location called to.

BRUSH UNIT: Referring to the radio designation for a heavy-duty 4-wheel drive firefighting apparatus or a fire in light to moderately wooded outdoor area.

BUCKET: The cab positions of an engine, truck, or rescue in which firefighters ride.

BUMP TEST: Used to determine if an air monitor is working. It will alarm if a toxic gas is present. It is a quick check to make sure the instrument responds to a sample of gas.

BUNKERS: A slang term that is used mostly to describe the components of a structural firefighting ensemble. The original use of the term bunkers referred only to the pant/boot combination that firefighters wore at night and placed next to their “bunks” for rapid donning.

CALL-BACK: Fire Department term used for overtime, messages frequently delayed referring to the “call-back person.”

CANTEEN: Fire Department support vehicle used to dispense refreshments (drinks, food, etc.) to personnel at incidents, usually used during inclement weather incidents and incidents lasting longer than 45 to 60 minutes in length.

CAPILLARIES: The very small blood vessels in the body that connect arteries and veins and filter the oxygen and nutrients from the blood into the tissues of the body.

CAPILLARY BLEEDING: Bleeding from the capillary.

CAPTAIN: Officer in charge of a fire department company or station, or any other position of comparable responsibility in the department, the highest rank in an individual company unit.

CAR: Denotes a fire department support vehicle, such as a sedan or station wagon, also denotes the radio designator used by junior-grade volunteer officers (Lieutenant or Captain).

CARBON DIOXIDE (CO₂): An inert colorless and odorless gas that is stored under pressure as a liquid that is capable of being self-expelled and is effective in smothering Class B and C fires.

CARBON MONOXIDE: Colorless, odorless, poisonous gas that when inhaled combines with the red blood cells excluding oxygen.

CARCINOGEN: A material that is capable of causing cancer in humans.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM: The heart, blood vessels, and blood within the body.

CAROTID PULSE: The pulse located on either side of the neck.

CASCADE SYSTEM: Series of large air tanks compiled for the use of refilling portable tanks for SCBA, can either be permanently mounted in stations, or mounted on an apparatus, typically Rescue Companies. Series of large air tanks compiled for the use of refilling portable tanks for SCBA, can either be permanently mounted in stations, or mounted on an apparatus, typically Rescue Companies.

CATCH THE HYDRANT: Instruction to an incoming pumper to stand by at a fire hydrant and prepare to flow water to another pumper on the fireground.

CAVE-IN: Term used for collapse of a trench or a hole being dug, or building or structure collapse.

CELLAR NOZZLES: Has four spray nozzles designed to rotate in a circular spray pattern for fighting fires in basements or cellars when firefighters cannot make a direct attack on the fire.

CHAIN OF COMMAND: Common fire service term that means to always work through your direct supervisor. The fire service is viewed as a paramilitary organization and because of this all requests for information outside the assigned workplace should go through the supervisor.

CHARGE THE LINE: Instruction to pump water into a hose line, either supply or attack lines.

CHECK VALVES: Valves installed to control water flow in one direction, typically when different systems are interconnected.

CHEMICAL BURNS: Burns caused by chemical substances that come into contact with the skin or tissues of the body, creating a caustic reaction.

CHEMTREC: Initials for the Chemical Manufacturers Transportation Emergency Center, a toll-free 24-hour service offering guidance, information and advice for fire departments handling a chemical transportation emergency.

CHIEF: Highest rank of the Fire and Rescue Department. There are also Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief, Battalion Chief and Volunteer Chief. They are responsible for major functions between the administration and the company officer level.

CHOKING AGENTS: Agents that cause a person to cough and have difficulty breathing. The terrorism agents that are considered choking agents are chlorine and phosgene, both very toxic gases.

CHRONIC: A continual or repeated exposure to a hazardous material. Also add the medical term here.

CLASS "A" FIRE: Ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber, and certain plastics.

CLASS "B" FIRE: Flammable or combustible liquids, flammable gases, greases, and similar materials.

CLASS "C" FIRE: Energized electrical equipment.

CLASS "D" FIRE: Combustible metals, such as magnesium, sodium, potassium, etc.

CLASS "K" FIRE: A new classification of fire as of 1998 that involves fires in combustible cooking fuels such as vegetable or animal oils and fats.

CLASS OF FIRE DAY: Classification given by the Virginia Department of Forestry or the U. S. Forest Service to indicate the degree of fire hazard, usually a rating form 1 to 5.

CLIPPING: Term associated with the use of two-way radios that is used to describe instances when either the first part of a message or the last part of a message is cut off as the result of either speaking before pressing the transmit key or releasing the transmit key prior to the end of the transmission.

COCKLOFT: The area between the roof and the ceiling.

COLD ZONE: The area of a hazardous material incident that is determined to possess no life threatening hazards, the Command Post is typically located in this area.

COLLAPSE ZONE: The area around and from a building where debris will land when it falls. As an absolute minimum this distance must be at least 1½ times the height of the building.

COMBUSTION: The chemical action in which heat and light are produced and the heat is used to maintain the chemical chain reaction to continue the process.

COME-ALONG: Cable-operated device used for pulling, e.g., extrication.

COMMAND OR COMMAND POST: Stationary position on an incident scene where the officer-in-charge of the incident operates, generally located at the street side of the incident, acting as a central point for observation, communications, and dissemination of orders. Command is also given a name as it relates to the incident's location, using either the street name (Richmond Highway Command), subdivision or area location (Lake Thoreau Command).

COMMAND VEHICLE: Typically used by operations chief officers in the fire service.

COMMERCIAL: Slang-term for a fire in a commercial establishment.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE: A disease that can be transmitted from one person to another.

COMMUNICATIONS: Sending, giving, or exchanging of information.

COMPANY: A team of firefighters with apparatus assigned to perform a specific function in a designated response area.

COMPRESSED AIR FOAM SYSTEMS (CAFS): A foam system where compressed air is injected into the foam solution prior to entering any hoseline. The fluffy foam created needs no further aspiration of air by the nozzle.

COMPUTER-AIDED DISPATCH /CAD: Computer-based automated system that assists the telecommunicator in assessing dispatch information and recommends responses.

CONFINED SPACE: a space that is large enough to be entered but is not designed for continuous occupancy.

CONFLAGRATION: a large and destructive fire.

CONSENT: The acceptance of emergency medical treatment by a patient or victim.

CONSIST: The shipping papers that list the cargo of a train.

CONSTRICTED: A condition of the pupils where they are much smaller than normal and may appear almost like a pinpoint."

CONTROLLED BURNING: Burning conducted for land clearing or the removal of excess brush that is creating a fire hazard, should always be under supervision.
Control room: a room on the ground floor of a highrise building where all building systems and fire alarm panel controls are located.

CRASH TRUCK: Specialized fire fighting apparatus designed to handle fires and accidents such as those involving aircraft or vehicles on highways, typically stationed at federal fire facilities and airports – see Foam Unit.

CRIBBING: Shortened pieces of wood in various lengths stacked on top of each other for the purpose of supporting an unstable vehicle, also known as shoring.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING (CISD): A formal gathering of incident responders to help defuse and address stress from a given incident.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM): A process for managing the short- and long-term effects of critical incident stress reactions.

CROSSLAY: Attack hose usually 1¼" in diameter and 200 feet long carried on an Engine in the middle of the apparatus. They are designed to be pulled from either the left or the right side and racked across the engine. Also known as Mattydale.

CUTTING TOOLS: The group of tools used to cut through or around materials.

DAMMING: The stopping of a body of water, which at the same time stops the spread of the spilled material.

DANGEROUS CARGO MANIFEST (DCM): The shipping papers for a ship, which lists the hazardous material on board.

DECONTAMINATION / DECON: The process of neutralizing and/or removing any hazardous material from personnel, gear, or equipment that have been exposed to the product or material.

DECK GUN: Permanently mounted or portable monitor device, used for flowing high volume water or foam. Also called a "monitor"

DEFENSIVE ATTACK: A calculated attack on a part of a problem or situation in an effort to hold ground until sufficient resources are available to convert to an offensive form of attack.

DEHYDRATION: A loss of water and vital fluids in the body.

DESK WATCH: Term used for station personnel designated to remain in a "radio room," monitor the radio, provide dispatch information, answer phones, greet public. When the CAD system is down often referred to as Daymode.

DIKING: A defensive method of stopping a spill. A common dike is constructed of dirt or sand and is used to hold a spilled product. In some facilities, a dike may be preconstructed such as around a tank farm.

DILATED: A condition of the pupils where they are much larger than normal and can take up almost the whole colored portion of the eye.

DILUTION: The addition of a material to a spilled material to make it less hazardous. In most cases water is used to dilute spilled material, although other chemicals could be used.

DIRECT ATTACK: Term used in firefighting for the mode of operation when battling a fire, specifically when hose lines are played onto a fire. Depending on the size and location of it, lines can be used to put out the fire and spread out the material burning to prevent any further burning of the material.

DISPATCH: The radio announcement of an incident. See General Announcement.

DISPOSITION OFFICER: Within the ICS, a position responsible for routing patients to medical facilities and communicating with hospitals, reports to the EMS Control Officer.

DISTRIBUTOR PIPE OR EXTENSION PIPE: See Cellar Nozzle

DIVERT: Redirect a unit to a higher priority call.

DIVISION: Command designation responsible for operations within an assigned geographic area.

DOUBLE FEMALE: Allows the two male ends of hose to be connected.

DOUBLE MALE: Used to connect two female thread couplings.

DRAFT: Operation to suction water from a static source when water on pumpers is not available and hydrants are not available as well.

DRESSING: The practice of making sure that all parts of a knot are laying in the proper orientation to the other parts and look exactly as the pictures herein indicate.

DRY CHEMICALS: Dry extinguishing agents divided into two categories. Regular dry chemicals work on Class B and C fires; multipurpose dry chemicals work on Class A, B, and C fires.

DRY HYDRANT: A piping system for drafting from a static water source with a fire department connection at one end and a strainer at the water end.

DRY PIPE SYSTEMS: Air under pressure replaces the water in the system to protect against freezing temperatures. The sprinkler control valve uses a dry pipe valve to keep pressurized air maintained above with the supply water under pressure below the valve.

DRY POWDERS: Extinguishing agents for Class D fires.

DUTCHMAN: A short fold of hose or a reverse fold that is used when loading hose and a coupling comes at a point where a fold should take place or when two sets of couplings end up on top of or next to each other. The Dutchman moves the coupling to another point in the load.

DYNAMIC: A rope having a high degree of elongation (10 to 15 percent) at normal safe working loads.

EAGLE: Refers to either of the helicopters operated by the United States Park Police, known as Eagle 1 or Eagle 2.

EARS: Elongated folds or flaps at the ends of a layer of hose to assist in pulling that later.

EDUCTOR: Device that siphons a liquid from a container into a moving stream.

ELECTRICAL CONDUCTOR: Any material that will permit electricity to flow through it.

EMERGENCY CALL BOX: System of telephones connected by private line telephone, radio-frequency, or cellular technology usually located in remote areas and used to report emergency situations.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER: See PSCC

EMERGENCY DECON: The rapid removal of a material from a person when that person (or responder) has become contaminated and needs immediate cleaning. Most emergency decon setups use a single hoseline to perform a quick gross decon of a person with water.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH

System designed for use by telecommunicators to assist them in evaluating patient symptoms using predetermined criteria and responses.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS): The delivery of pre-hospital medical treatment.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (EMT): An individual trained and certified to provide basic life support emergency medical care. B = Basic, I = Intermediate, P = Paramedic

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP): A defined program that offers professional mental health and other health services to employees.

EMS CONTROL: Within the ICS, a position responsible for development of the emergency medical plan for the incident, to include obtaining treatment and transportation of all casualties, reports to the Incident Commander.

EMS SUPERVISOR: Normally filled by the rank of Captain, serves as an area supervisor within a battalion, responsible for supervision of EMS units, hospital problems, assists in establishing command structure at incidents.

EMS TASK FORCE (ETF): A compliment of EMS transport units and an additional EMS Supervisor that can be requested to an incident scene.

EMS UNIT: Medic Unit or Ambulance. Used as a generic term for either.

ENCAPSULATED SUIT: A chemical suit that covers the responder, including the breathing apparatus. Usually associated with Level A clothing, that is gas and liquid tight, but there are some Level B styles that are fully encapsulated, but not gas or liquid tight.

END UNIT: Term used with townhouses or rowhouses, given by arriving units reporting building construction and the situation report. Also known as END-OF-ROW.

ENGINE: Fire department pumper, generally used for water supply, used for the initial attach piece.

ENGINE COMPANY: The unit designation of a group of firefighters assigned to a piece of apparatus designed to deliver water to the fire scene.

ENGULFED: To swallow up or overwhelm.

ENHANCED 9-1-1: Similar in nature to basic 9-1-1 but with the capability to provide the callers' telephone number and address.

ENROUTE: Term generally referring to moving from point A to point B, as well as ambulances indicating they are transporting a patient.

ETOH: Slang term used for referring to patients or victims that appear to be under the influence of alcohol or alcohol-related products. It is used during communications to alleviate any problems by announcing that the person appears "drunk," which only compounds the problem for the attending caregivers. Also has an old term: "6X"

EVACUATION: The movement of people from an area, usually their homes, to another area that is considered to be safe. People are evacuated when they are no longer safe in their current area.

EVOLUTION: Operational sequence or drill requiring teamwork and covering basic firefighting and EMS tasks.

EXIT DRILLS IN THE HOME (EDITH): A fire survival program to encourage people to practice fire drills from their home or residence.

EXPLOSIVE LIMITS: A concentration of a gas or liquid that is not too rich or too lean to ignite with force.

EXPOSURE: Property that may be endangered by a fire in another structure or by an outside fire, contamination of a person with the pathogens of another, medical condition caused by long-term effects of either heat or cold.

EXTENSION LADDER: A ladder consisting of two or more sections that has the ability to be extended to a desired height through the use of a halyard.

EXTERNAL BLEEDING: Bleeding that is coming from an open wound on the body.

EXTRICATION: Operation requiring personnel to use specialized equipment to free a victim who has been entrapped in a vehicle or some other object.

FACEPIECE: The part of the SCBA that attaches to and covers your face from the contaminants outside.

FAIRFAX: Radio designator for our dispatch communications center.

Example: Engine 822 to Fairfax. Our neighboring jurisdictions use their geographic terms such as Arlington, Alexandria, Prince William.

FALSE ALARM: An alarm for which no fire existed or for which fire department response was unnecessary, may be accidental or malicious.

FAN: Power-driven blower used to remove smoke from burning buildings or to blow fresh air into a building to expel smoke and heat. Also referred to as Smoke Ejectors or PPV fans.

FEMORAL ARTERY: A major artery in the lower body near the groin that supplies the leg with blood. Can be used as a pressure point for controlling bleeding in the lower extremities.

FILL: Known as FILL-IN or TRANSFER, refers to an order to relocate a company or a specific piece of apparatus to cover vacated territory.

FILL THE BOX: Refers to a request to upgrade fire department response to a normal full-alarm building assignment.

FIRE ALARM: Notification to the fire department that a fire or other related emergency is in progress, which results in a response.

FIRE DRILL: Practice exercise to familiarize people in what to do in case of fire or emergency.

FIRE HAZARD: Any condition, situation, or operation that could lead to the ignition of unwanted combustion or result in proper combustion becoming uncontrolled.

FIRE HOSE: A flexible conduit used to convey water or other agent from a water source to the fire.

FIRE LOAD: All the parts or contents of a building that are combustible. The heat given off by these materials when they burn is usually measured in British thermal units or pounds per square foot.

FIREFIGHTER: Individual trained as a generalist, to provide hands on resources for control of fire and EMS incidents. All firefighters in Fairfax County receive fire suppression training and are Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT).

FIRE MARSHAL: Individuals responsible for the investigation of a fire and/or the enforcement of laws.

FIRE STATION ALERTING SYSTEM: System used to transmit emergency response information to fire station personnel via voice and/or digital transmissions. Also known as "Tones"

FIRE STREAM: The water or other agent as it leaves the hose and nozzle toward its objective, usually the fire.

FIRE TETRAHEDRON: Four-sided pyramid-like figure describing the heat, fuel, oxygen, and chemical reaction necessary for combustion.

FIRE WATCH: Buildings with malfunctioning or inoperable fire detection systems must have personnel on site to perform specific fire watch, physically walking through the building or premises looking for signs of fire or smoke.

FIRST ALARM: The initial alarm of fire calling for a normal response by pre-assigned companies.

FIRST-DEGREE BURNS: Burns affecting the outermost layer of skin, which typically causes redness of the skin, swelling, and pain.

FIRST DUE: The company nearest in distance or running time to a given location. This company is generally the first to arrive and the last to leave an incident.

FIRST RESPONDER: Term used by Fire Department personnel to denote a specific piece of apparatus that will arrive first to an incident, mainly EMS-related calls. Even though they may be only partially trained to deal with the incident, they are at least providing some type of care or service, until the appropriate apparatus arrives. Also a State-wide term used to denote the first level of medical training for field personnel, with the next level being EMT.

FIT TEST: A test that ensures the respiratory protection fits the face and offers maximum protections.

FLAMMABLE RANGE: Ratio of gas to air that will sustain fire if exposed to flame or spark.

FLASHOVER: The state of a fire when a room or other area and its contents are heated to a point when flames flash over the entire surface or area.

FLOW: The rate or quantity of water delivered, usually measured in gallons per minute or liters per minute.

FLY: That portion of the ladder that extends out from the bed ladder. Also called fly section.

FOAM: Synthetically-produced liquid material which when applied to a burning flammable liquid acts as a vapor barrier which smothers or removes air from the fire. Manufactured in various strengths for various types of materials used on, 3%, 5%, AFFF, Alcohol-based, Compressed Air Foam.

FOAM UNIT: A specifically designed mobile unit with integral foam system equipment primarily used for control of fuel fires of all types, and specifically used on airports for aircraft incidents.

FOG NOZZLE: Delivers either a fixed spray pattern or variable combination of straight stream and spray patterns.

FORCIBLE ENTRY: The fire scene task of gaining entry to a building or secured area by disabling, breaking, or going around locking and security devices.

FRACTURE: A medical term for a broken or cracked bone in the body.

FREELANCING: The act of working alone or performing a task for which the firefighter has not been assigned.

FRICTION LOSS: Measurement of friction in a system such as a hoseline.

FRONTAGE: The portion of a property that faces and actually touches the street.

FULLY INVOLVED: The entire area of a fire building is so involved in heat, smoke, and flame that the immediate access to the interior is not possible until some measure of control has been obtained with hose streams.

GARDEN APARTMENT: A two- or three-story apartment building with common entryways and layouts on each floor, surrounded by greenery and landscaping, sometimes having porches and patios.

GAS LEAK: Term referring to a leak of a petroleum-derivative from a source. Can also be natural gas or gasoline leaking from a tank or transmission line.

GAS METER: Metering equipment used to limit and disperse natural gas within a structure.

GAS VALVES: Indicating and non-indicating valves that are opened and closed to control water flow.

GAUGE PRESSURE: Measures pressure without atmospheric pressure. Normally fire department gauges do not measure atmospheric pressure and gauge pressure is measured in psi or psig.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT: The actual dispatching of a call or greater alarm. Also known as GA.

GREATER ALARM: The actual dispatching of additional resources to the original alarm location. Generally used when the first alarm assignment cannot handle the type of the type of incident, or when the incident commander decides that additional help is needed for whatever reasons.

GREEN TAG: (1) Term used to identify a minor injury (Example: Engine 822 to Fairfax, we have 2 Green Tag patients.) (2) Triage Tag used to mark a minor injury patient during a Mass Casualty Incident as not needing immediate treatment and transport.

GREY TAG: (1) Term used to identify a deceased patient. (Example: Engine 822 to Fairfax, we have 2 Grey Tags.) (2) Triage Tag used to mark a deceased patient during a Mass Casualty Incident.

GROSS DECON: The portion of the decontamination process that removes the majority of the chemicals through a flushing process. The gross washing is done using large amounts of water, and is usually done by the individual or the individual's partner.

GROSS NEGLIGENCE: Occurs when an individual disregards training and continues to act in a manner without regard for others.

GROUND PADS: Sheets of plywood, planks, aluminum sheets, or ladders, etc., used to distribute weight over a larger area.

GROUP: Command designation responsible for operations within an assigned functional area. (Extrication Group, Ventilation Group, etc.)

GUIDELINE/LIFELINE: Rope used as a crew is searching a structure to assist them in finding their way back out.

HALLIGAN TOOL: A forcible entry tool, consisting of a claw at one end and two spikes projecting at right angles at the other end.

HALON: A chemical extinguishing agent which interrupts the physical reaction of fire causing it to cease.

HALYARD: A rope or cable that is used to raise the fly ladders of an extension ladder.

HAND LINE: A small hose line handled manually. Also known as an Attack Line.

HAND TOOL: Small tools, coming in any possible variety, that are typically large enough to carry in your hands, such as an axe, hand-light, etc.

HARD SLEEVE: A length of rigid suction hose used to draft water from a static source below the level of the pump, typically from ponds, rivers, pools, etc., ranging from 4 to 6 inches in diameter.

HARDWARE: Equipment used in conjunction with life safety ropes and harnesses (carabineers, figure eights, rappel tacks, etc.).

HARNES: Webbing sewn together to form a belt, seat harness, or seat and chest harness combinations.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: Chemicals that are flammable, explosive, or otherwise capable of causing death or destruction when improperly handled or released. Also known as hazmat

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESCUE: Conventional Fire Department rescue squad staffed by at least 3 qualified members of the HMRT (Hazardous Materials Response Team) and equipped with a basic inventory of reference material, leak control devices, and absorbents. Also known as a Hazmat Squad

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SUPPORT UNIT: Unit equipped with tools, absorbent, and containment equipment, etc. Part of the Haz Mat Unit, operated as one company using two vehicles. Typically members of station 34.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS UNIT: Unit equipped with reference material, special protective clothing, detection devices, leak control, and containment equipment, absorbents, and other tools used to deal with hazardous materials emergencies. Typically staffed by members station 34.

HAZ MAT: Abbreviated term for Hazardous Materials which is any substance (gas, liquid, or solid) which could pose a threat to health, life, or property.

HIGBEE CUT: The blunt ending of the threads of fire hose couplings that allows the threads to be properly matched, avoiding cross-threading.

HIGHRISE PACK: Local term referring to a preset hose package used to carry into highrise structures for interior firefighting. It consists of one pack of 100' of 2 ½" hose with a gated wye, one pack of 100' of 1 ¾" hose with nozzle. An additional bag of 50' of 1 ¾" hose, a second nozzle, and various tools make up the "officer's bag" component of the High Rise Pack.

HOISTWAY: The shaft in which an elevator or a number of elevators travel.

HOOKE: Tool which is normally kept on Trucks Engines and Rescues, used for pulling apart ceilings, walls, and floors while searching for possible fire extension. Also known as Pike Pole.

HORIZONTAL VENTILATION: Channeled pathway for fire ventilation via horizontal openings.

HOSE BED: The portion of compartment of fire apparatus that carries the hose.

HOSE BRIDGES: Devices that allow vehicles to pass over a section of hose without damaging it.

HOSE CLAMP: A device to control the flow of water by squeezing or clamping the hose shut. Some work by pushing a lever that closes the jaws of the device and others have a screw mechanism or hydraulic pump that closes the jaws.

HOSE ROLLER OR HOIST: A metal frame, with a securing rope, shaped to fit over a windowsill or edge of a roof with two rollers to allow the hose to roll over the edge, preventing chafe.

HOSTILE FIRE: Fire situation that can endanger the lives of Fire Department personnel operating on the incident. Can either be humanly-induced, such as a riot-type situation, or a large or stubborn fire that is difficult to extinguish.

HOSPITAL REROUTES: Hospital ward and emergency room bed space often become full, forcing the facilities to reroute EMS units to other medical facilities.

HOT SPOT: Used to refer to a hot and difficult, or concealed area of fire in a structure, such as inside walls or crawl spaces. Also refers to grass or brush fires with small areas that continue to burn due to the fire being very deep-seated.

HOT ZONE: The area of a hazardous material incident scene that is determined to possess maximum life hazard. Access into this area should be highly controlled and personnel and equipment entering this area must pass through DECON when exiting.

HURST TOOL: Hydraulically operated rescue tool used in and/or for rescue and forcible entry.

HYDRANT VALVES OR SWITCH VALVES: Valve used on a hydrant that allows an engine to connect and charge its supply line immediately but also allows an additional engine to connect to the same hydrant without shutting down the hydrant, and increases the flow of the hydrant.

HYDRANT WRENCHES: Tools used to operate the valves on a hydrant. May also be used as a spanner wrench. Some are plain wrenches and others have a ratchet feature to speed the operation of the valve.

HYDRAULICS: The study of fluids at rest and in motion.

HYPOXIA: A deficiency of oxygen.

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS): The formation of a command structure at an incident that is progressing in size beyond normal control.

IGNITION: The point at which the need for outside heat application ceases and a material sustains combustion based on its own generation of heat.

IGNITION POINT: The temperature at which a substance will continue to burn after the source is removed.

IGNITION TEMPERATURE: The temperature of a liquid at which it will ignite on its own without an ignition source

IMMEDIATELY DANGEROUS TO LIFE AND HEALTH (IDLH): The maximum level of danger one could be exposed to and still escape without experiencing any effects that may impair escape or cause irreversible health effects.

IMPLIED CONSENT: The assumption of acceptance of emergency medical treatment by an unconscious patient or a child with no parents or legal guardians present.

INCENDIARY AGENTS: Chemicals that are used to start fires, most common being a Molotov cocktail.

INCH-AND-THREE-QUARTER: Standard hand-held fire attack hose carried on most pumpers, has greater capacity and power capabilities than the inch-and-a-half.

INCIDENT ACTION PLAN (IAP): A strategic and tactical plan developed by the incident commander.

INCIDENT COMMANDER: The officer-in-charge of a particular incident.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IMS): See ICS.

INCISION: An incision is a cut to the skin that leaves a straight, even pattern.

INCREASER: Used to connect a small hose to a larger one.

INFECTION CONTROL: Procedures and practices for firefighters and emergency medical care providers to follow to prevent the transmission of diseases and germs from a patient to themselves or other patients.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT: The initial investigative action taken by care providers to determine if the patient has the basic signs of life as well as any serious, life-threatening injuries.

INNER BELTWAY: Refers to that portion of the Capital Beltway closest to Washington D.C. regardless of East, West, North, South or I495 or I95 designations.

INSPECTOR: Individual responsible for conducting fire code compliance and occupancy permit inspections, as well as handling individual complaints of fire code violations.

INTERMODAL CONTAINERS: These are constructed in a fashion so that they can be transported by highway, rail, or by ship. Intermodal containers exist for solids, liquids, and gases.

INTERNAL BLEEDING: Bleeding within the body when no visible open wound is present.

INVESTIGATOR: Individual responsible for conducting investigations of suspicious fires, and arresting and processing suspects in suspicious or malicious fire cases.

IRONS: The combination of a Halligan tool and flathead ax or maul.

IRRITANT: A material that is irritating to humans, but usually does not cause any long-term adverse health effects.

ISOLATION AREA: An area that is set up by responders and is intended to keep people, both citizens and responders, out. May later become the hot zone/sector as the incident evolves. Is the minimum area that should be established any chemical spills.

J: Strictly local term used as a radio designator for brush jeeps, because "jeep" or "chief" sound too similar on the radio.

JACKET: The outer part of the hose, often a woven cloth or rubberized material, which protects the hose from mechanical and other damage.

JAMB: The mounting frame for a door.

JET DUMP: A device that speeds the process of dumping a load of water from a tanker/tender.

JOIST: A framing member that supports the floor or roof decking.

K-12: Powerful gasoline-operated saw equipped with a circular blade, used primarily for opening roofs.

K-TOOL: Small tool used to break dead bolt-type locks from doors.

KNOCK DOWN: Term indicating an effort to aggressively attack a fire and stop its spread.

KNOX BOX: Box located at various buildings that are accessed only by Fire Department keys that store keys for entry into that specific building.

LACERATION: A cut to the skin and underlying tissues that leaves an irregular, even pattern.

LADDER THE BUILDING: An instruction to a truck to place ladders at the front, rear, or sides of a fire building with ladders to one or more windows on each floor for rescue or to advance hose lines, and one or more ladders to the roof to provide access for ventilation or to check equipment often stored on roofs.

LADDERPIPE: Permanent or portable monitor device, used at the top of an extended aerial to provide an elevated master stream.

LAMINATED GLASS: Glass composed of two or more sheets of glass with a plastic sheet between them. The purpose of the plastic sheet is to hold the glass together if broken, thus reducing the hazard of flying glass.

LAYING DUALS: See Supply Line

LAYOUT: The Act of Laying out Supply Line.

LEADER LINE: 400' attack hose consisting of 200' of 2½" connected to a gated wye connected to 200' of 1¾" hose.

LEVEL "A" PROTECTIVE CLOTHING: Fully encapsulated chemical protective clothing. It is gas and liquid tight and offers protection against chemical attack. Also known as Level A Suit

LEVEL "B" PROTECTIVE CLOTHING: A level or protective clothing that is usually associated with splash protection. Level B requires the use of SCBA. Various clothing styles are considered Level B.

LEVEL I – STAGING: Is a basic level of staging apparatus dispatched on an incident and shall be used to place apparatus in an uncommitted location near the incident.

LEVEL II – STAGING: Used for large, complex incidents that require an on-scene reserve of resources. Requires a formal staging of apparatus away from the Command Post but within the 2-minute response guideline, should have the following complement of apparatus staged at all times; 2 Engines, 1 Truck, 1 Rescue Squad, 1 BLS Unit, 1 Battalion Chief

LIABILITY: The possibility of being held responsible for individual actions.

LIFELINE: ¾ inch diameter rope of at least 150 feet in length, coiled in bags and ready for use.

LIFEPAK: Brand name for most commonly used heart monitoring and defibrillating equipment.

LIFEPAK 300: Brand name for defibrillator that can be utilized by EMT-trained personnel carried on engines, trucks, and squads. Patients can be defibrillated without doctors or paramedics being present.

LIFE SAFETY: Term applied to the fire protection concept in which buildings are designed to allow for the escape of building occupants without injuries. Life safety usually makes the building more fire resistant, but this is not the main goal.

LIGHT BALLAST: Power transfer unit often found on fluorescent light fixtures.

LIGHT/AIR UNIT: Mobile truck equipped with an electrical generator and lighting capability for lighting up incident scenes, and a compressor and reservoir air tanks for filling air bottles.

LIGHT TRAILER: Towable trailer with lights and small generator used for lighting up incident scenes on long-term incidents.

LINE: Short term for a hoseline.

LINER: (1)The inner layer of fire hose, usually made of rubber or plastic material, that keeps the water in the tubing of the hose. (2) The inner layer of your protective clothing.

LOAD-AND-GO: Term used by EMS personnel in their patient assessment when determining the severity of a patient. Typically, if the patient is critical, the units will "load and go," treating the patient on the way to the hospital or landing zone, if medivacing, instead of staying on the scene for any length of time to finish patient treatment before transporting.

LOAD-BEARING WALL: A wall, usually masonry, which supports other walls, floors, or roofs.

LOCAL ALARM: Alarm given only to the company nearest to a small, trivial fire not requiring a full response, such as an auto fire or a dumpster fire.

LOGISTICS OFFICER: Within the ICS, position responsible for all support and service functions necessary to overcome an incident, to include obtaining any needed resources that are not normal everyday requirements for along term incidents, reports to the Incident Commander.

LOWER EXPLOSIVE LIMIT (LEL): The lower part of the flammable ranges, and is the minimum required to have a fire or explosion.

LZ: Landing Zone for the landing of helicopters being used for an incident. See Medivac.

MASK: See "Facepiece"

MASS CASUALTY: An incident in which the number of patients exceeds the capability of the EMS to manage the incident effectively. In Fairfax County a mass casualty consists of 10 or more patients.

MASTER STREAM: Any variety of heavy streams formed by two or more large lines into a single heavy stream device, not a hand-held line. Deck Guns and Ladderpipes are examples of Master Streams.

MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS (MSDS):

Information sheets for employees that provide specific information about a chemical, with attention to health effects, handling, and emergency procedures.

MATTYDALE: Slang term meaning Crosslay. See Crosslay.

MAYDAY: A universal call for help. A Mayday indicates that an individual or team is in extreme danger.

MCT: Mobile Computer Terminal.

MEANS OF EGRESS: A safe and continuous path of travel from any point in a structure leading to a public way. Comprised of three parts, the exit access, the exit, and the exit discharge.

MED CHANNEL: Radio channel utilized for communications between EMS units and emergency rooms for relaying patient information and receiving treatment orders.

MEDIC: Term referring to a Medic Unit, which is an Advanced Life Support Unit.

MEDICAL CONTROL: Established by the controlling medical facility as the authority that will be responsible for giving controlled drug and treatment orders to EMS units treating and transporting patients.

MEDIVAC: An ambulance that transports patients by air. Typically, medivac units are helicopters with highly training EMS personnel and nurses.

MIDDLE UNIT: The townhouse or store in a strip shopping center that is not at either end.

MITIGATION: Actions taken to eliminate a hazard or make a hazard less severe or less likely to cause harm. Typically a proactive action.

MOBILE RADIO: Complete receiver/transmitter unit that is designed for use in a vehicle.

MONITOR: See Deck Gun

MONITORED FIRE ALARM: A fire alarm system which is triggered in a business or a residence and transmitted to an authority either on-site, as in an industrial setting, or to another location, as an alarm company where the system is watched or monitored by that authority for any activations.

MOP-UP: A late stage in the firefighting operation in which remaining hot spots are checked and eliminated with small jets from the attack line or from a smaller hose.

MORTAR: Mixture of sand and Portland cement used as a bonding material in masonry construction.

MULTIGAS DETECTOR: A term used to describe an air monitor that measures oxygen levels, explosives (flammable) levels, and one or two toxic gases such as carbon monoxide or hydrogen sulfide.

MULTI-ALARM INCIDENT: Involves the response of additional personnel. See Alarm or Greater Alarm for example.

MUTUAL AID: Two-way assistance by fire departments or two or more communities freely given under pre-arranged plans or contracts on the basis that each will aid the other in time or emergency and also providing for joint or cooperative response to alarms near municipal boundaries.

MUTUAL BOX: An area near municipal boundaries which is routinely covered by more than one fire department in times of emergency, typically used for calls within Fairfax County, Arlington, and Alexandria.

NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

(NFPA): A not-for-profit membership organization that uses a consensus process to develop model fire prevention codes and firefighting training standards.

NEGLIGENCE: Acting in an irresponsible manner, or different from the way in which someone was Trained; that is, differing from the standard of care.

NEONATAL TRANSPORT: Specialized transportation of sick or injured newborns or infants, often kept in small transportable incubators called "isolets." Medical team of a doctor and nurse usually accompany the infant.

NERVE AGENTS: Chemicals that are designed to kill humans, specifically in warfare. They are chemically similar to organophosphorus pesticides and cause the same medical reaction in humans.

NESTED: Describes an un-extended extension ladder.

NFPA 1001: Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, a national consensus training standard establishing the job performance requirements of tasks to be performed by Firefighters.

NFPA 1500: National Fire Protection Association standard created by the Technical Committee on Fire Service Occupational Safety and Health that addresses a number of issues concerning protective equipment.

NFPA 1981: National Fire Protection Association standard specific to open-circuit SCBA for fire service use contains additional requirements above the NIOSH certification.

9-1-1: Emergency telephone number that provides access to the public safety services in the community, region, and, ultimately, nation. Also, see Enhanced 911.

NIOSH: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 42 CFR Part 84, sole responsibility for testing and certification of respiratory protection including fire service SCBA.

NO-KNOWLEDGE HARDWARE: Locking devices that require no key or special knowledge to operate.

NORTH AMERICAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

GUIDEBOOK (NAERG): Book provided by the DOT that assists the first responder in making decisions at a Transportation-related chemical incident.

NOTHING SHOWING OR EVIDENT: Message transmitted by the first arriving apparatus to a fire incident which indicates there is no visible evidence of a fire condition.

NOZZLE: A tapered or constricted tube or device used to increase the speed or change the direction of water or other fluids. Also see Fog Nozzle and Solid Stream Nozzle.

NOZZLE FLOW: The amount or volume of water that a nozzle will provide. Flow is measured in gallons per minute.

NOZZLE PRESSURE: The pressure required to effectively operate a nozzle. Pressure is measured in pounds per square inch or kilopascals.

NOZZLE REACH: The distance the water will travel after leaving the nozzle. Reach is a function of the pressure, which is converted to velocity or speed of the water leaving the nozzle.

NOZZLE REACTION: The force of nature that makes the nozzle move in the opposite direction of the water flow. The nozzle operator must counteract the thrust exerted by the nozzle to maintain control.

OCCUPANT USE HOSE: Hose that is used in standpipe systems for building occupants to fight incipient fires. It is usually 1-1/2 inch (38-mm) single-jacket hose similar to attack hose.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

ADMINISTRATION (OSHA): The federal agency, under the Department of Labor, that is responsible for employee occupational safety.

OFFENSIVE ATTACK: An aggressive attack on a situation where resources are adequate and capable of handling the situation.

OFFICER-IN-CHARGE: Individual of authority in command of any incident scene, or in charge of a specific unit.

ONE-AND-ONE: Term used by incident commander to denote the number of engines and trucks being held on the scene. These numbers can also be increased as the situation warrants, i.e., TWO-AND-TWO. The first number designates the number of Engines and the second number designates the number of trucks.

OPERATIONS OFFICER: Within the ICS, a position responsible for all the "physical" operations at an incident. Has other sectors reporting or assigned to him/her, reports to the Incident Commands.

OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134: Standard establishing minimum medical, training, and equipment levels for respiratory protection programs.

OUTSIDE STEM AND YOKE (O&Y) VALVE: Has a wheel on a stem housed in a yoke or housing. When the stem is exposed or outside, the valve is open. Also called an outside screw and yoke valve.

OVERHAUL: Late stage of the firefighting operation when the area involved in the fire, and all contents involved are carefully scrutinized for any remaining traces of fire or embers, and efforts are made to protect property from further damage due to elements, run-off, etc.

OVERPACKED: A response action that involves the placing of a leaking drum (or container) into another drum. There are drums made specifically to be used as overpack drums in that they are oversized to handle a normal size drum.

OUTER BELTWAY: Refers to the lanes of the Capital Beltway, either I495 or I95, which lie on the outermost loop from Washington D.C.

OXIDIZER: A catalyst in the breakdown of molecules.

OXYGEN DEFICIENT ATMOSPHERE: An atmosphere with an oxygen content below 19.5 percent by volume.

PACKAGING: The bandaging and preparing of a patient to be moved from the place of injury to a stretcher.

PANIC HARDWARE: Hardware mounted on doors that enable them to be opened by pushing from the inside. See also No Knowledge Hardware

PAR: PERSONNEL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT, used in the Incident Command System to track the placement and status of all personnel at incidents to account for their whereabouts. Also used by unit commanders to tell the Incident Commander that all personnel assigned to them are accounted for. Example: Engine 822 is on the second floor with a crew of 3. We are PAR.

PARAMEDIC: An individual trained and certified to provide advanced life support emergency medical care, including drug therapy. In Fairfax County EMT (I) and EMT (P) are both known as Paramedics.

PARAMEDIC ENGINE: Engine Company that has an additional person on board who is trained as a paramedic, carries a drug box, defibrillator, and other EMS equipment, and can function as a first responder on ALS calls, as well as handle regular engine calls.

PARAPET: The projection of a wall above the roof line of a building.

PASSING COMMAND: When the first arriving officer of a unit determines that he or she will be unable to retain command due to the situation, he or she will advise that they are passing command, whether to a specific unit or the next arriving officer.

PASSPORT: Part of the Personnel Accountability System, small plastic board with individual name tags, identifying each person on the specific piece of apparatus. A specific place is identified by the first arriving unit at an incident as the drop-off point for all passports, to be collected by the Incident Commander and start the PAR system.

PERSONAL ALERT SAFETY SYSTEM (PASS): A device that emits a loud alert or warning that the wearer is motionless.

PIERCING NOZZLES: Originally designed to penetrate the skin of aircraft and now have been modified to pierce through building walls and floors.

PIKE POLE: See HOOK

PIPE CHASES: A construction term used to describe voids designed to house building water supply and waste pipes. The term electrical chase is used for wiring.

PITOT GAUGE: A device with an opening in its blade-shaped section that allows water to flow to a Bourdon gauge and registers the flowing discharge pressure of an orifice.

PLATFORM TRUCK: A regular aerial truck that has a basket attached to the end of it, used for carrying personnel to upper reaches of a structure or an incident to work, also used to affect rescues of persons trapped at heights that won't allow them escape under normal situations. Also known as a Tower.

PLENUM: The void area above a drop ceiling typically found in commercial structures.

PNEUMATIC SHORES: See Air Shores

POD: Platform-On-Demand transportable, truck-loaded containers used for various specialty operations within the department, such as Command, TROT, EMS, Haz Mat, Communications.

PORT-A-POWER: Manually operated hydraulic jack used in extrication and forcible entry.

PORT-A-TANK: Folding portable tank used to dump winter into for used in rural water supply operations, holds the water which is then drafted by pumpers.

PORTABLE WATER TANKS: Collapsible or inflatable temporary tanks for the storage of water that is dumped from tankers or tenders. Usually carried by the tender to set up a dump site. Same as Port-A-Tank.

POSITIVE PRESSURE: A feature of SCBA providing continuous supply of air, delivered by the regulator to the face piece, keeping toxic gases from entering. This pressure (1-1/2 to 2 psi, depending on the manufacturer), is slightly above atmospheric pressure.

POSITIVE PRESSURE VENTILATION (PPV): Use of forced air and semi-sealed structure to ventilate a building, pushing air into it and forcing the smoke and gases out of one opening that is strategically chosen.

POST INDICATOR VALVE (PIV): A control valve that is mounted on a post case with a small window, reading either "OPEN" or "SHUT".

POV FAN: Gas-powered, forced-air fan used to push air into a structure to force out smoke, heat, and gases, in an effort to ventilate the structure. Also See Fan.

PRE-INCIDENT MANAGEMENT: Advance planning if firefighting tactics and strategies or other emergency activities that can be anticipated to occur at a particular location. Often referred to as preplanning.

PRE-PIPED: Apparatus that has come from the manufacturer with permanently mounted hose lines, usually galvanized steel piping, typically seen in Aerial Trucks that have a pre-piped waterway to the top of the aerial when fully extended, or in Engines that have an additional Foam tank and have the additional hoselines from the Foam tank already “pre-piped.”

PRE-PLAN: A pre-fire plan, usually written and graphic in nature, explains a type of building and any possible fire hazards that may exist in or around it, provides valuable information for responding units, gives them the opportunity to plan ahead while en-route to the scene.

PRYING TOOLS: The group of tools used to separate objects by means of a mechanical advantage.

PSCC: Public Safety Communications Center. This is what our dispatch center is called. Also See Fairfax.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO): Fire Department person responsible for the formulation and release of information to the news media about incidents, typically obtains a briefing from the Incident Command, establishes an area of meet with the news media, and releases information according to Department guidelines.

PUBLIC SERVICE: A non-emergency request for fire or EMS services to aid citizens or to remove a potential hazard from dangerous exposure to the public.

PULLING THE CEILING: Process of pulling down ceiling tiles or sheet-rock to check for any possible extension of fire or smoke, usually done by Trucks.

PULL THE METER: Instruction to remove the electrical service meter from a structure, cover it with a clear plate, and notify the electrical utility company.

PULLING TOOLS: The group of tools used to pull away materials.

PUMP OPERATOR: A generic term to describe the person responsible for operating a fire apparatus pump. Other commonly used titles include motor pump operator, engineer, technician, chauffeur, and driver/operator.

PUMPER: Mobile fire department apparatus capable of pumping at least 500 gallons per minute (GPM) and carrying hose and other firefighting equipment. In Fairfax County the term Pumper is used to denote a piece of apparatus that does not meet minimum staffing requirements and can only respond to calls as a water supply unit.

PUNCTURE: An injury caused by an object that has stabbed the body.

RACK HOSE: Process of placing hose lines back onto engines after they have been either laid out or pulled.

RADIAL PULSE: The pulse located in either wrist.

RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM (RIT): A company designated to search for and rescue trapped or lost firefighters.

RECEO: Acronym coined by Lloyd Layman standing for Rescue, Exposure, Confinement, Extinguishment, and Overhaul.

RED TAG: (1) Paper tag placed on a faulty or disconnected utility or appliance indicating that service has been interrupted and should not be reconnected until maintenance and repair authority has serviced the red-tagged item. (2) Term used to identify a critically injured patient. Example: Engine 822 to Fairfax, we have 2 Red Tag patients. (3) Triage Tag used to mark a critically injured patient during a Mass Casualty Incident as needing immediate treatment and transport.

REDUCERS: Used to connect a larger hose to a smaller one.

REHABILITATION AREA OR REHAB: Area designated for the purpose of relieving and resting firefighting crews after periods of intense physical stress. This area is determined after the Incident commander has assigned an individual as the Rehab Officer. Two sections with one being the rest and refreshment area, and the other for treatment of any physical problems incurred by the crew members.

REHAB OFFICER: Within the ICS, a position responsible for the organized response of the physical well-being of emergency personnel operating on an incident, may be necessary to establish rehab areas for the safety and well-being of Fire Department personnel, maintains a log of crews entering and leaving the rehab area.

REKINDLE: An instance where the fire department is called back to a location where fire was previously extinguished and has re-ignited due to latent heat, sparks or embers.

RESCUE: Those actions that firefighters perform at emergency scenes to remove victims from imminent danger or to extricate them if they are already entrapped.

RESCUE COMPANY: The unit designation of a group of firefighters assigned to perform specialized rescue work and/or tactics and functions such as forcible entry, search and rescue, ventilation, etc.

RESCUE ENGINE: Apparatus that can be used as either an Engine or Rescue Squad, carries all equipment necessary to function as either.

RESCUE SQUAD: Old term used for a Rescue Company

RESERVE: Piece of mobile equipment which is not normally committed to daily service.

RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER SYSTEM: Smaller and more affordable version of a wet or dry pipe sprinkler system designed to control the level of fire involvement such that residents can escape.

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM: The system of the human body that exchanges oxygen and waste gases to and from the circulatory system.

RESPOND: Term used to denote an instruction to handle an incident as an emergency with use of emergency warning systems and emergency vehicle operations indicated.

REVERSE LAY: Indicates the laying out of supply hose from the fire to the water source, which is reverse from "normal" operations.

RISK/BENEFIT: An evaluation of the potential benefit that a task will accomplish in relationship to the hazards that will be faced while completing the task.

RIT: See "Rapid Intervention Team"

ROLL CALL: Procedures used by dispatchers to make sure that the equipment dispatched is actually responding and/or on the proper radio channel, may also be used in the PAR system when trying to account for all units at an incident.

ROOM-AND-CONTENTS: Used to indicate the extent of fire damage in a structure, usually means fire was confined to one room and the contents of that room damaged.

ROPE HOSE TOOL: About 6 feet (2m) of ½-inch (13-mm) rope spliced into a loop with a large metal hook at one end and a 2-inch (50-mm) ring at the other. Used to tie in hose and ladders, carry hose, and many other tasks requiring a short piece of rope.

R-SERIES UNIT: A fully staffed Engine or EMS unit in a station where an identical unit is already staffed, typically the R-series unit is staffed by volunteers to supplement career staffing and can operate independently of other units in that section.

SAFETY OFFICER: Works out of the Health and Safety Branch, deals with daily problems relating to injuries and vehicle accidents involving fire department personnel. Deals with health issues relating to personnel exposed to contaminating diseases and pathogens. A position held by one Lieutenant on each shift, a position responsible for monitoring the incident scene for safety hazards and unsafe conditions, reports to the Incident Commander.

SALVAGE: Procedure to reduce incidental losses due to smoke, water, and weather during and following a fire.

SAWZALL: Electrically or gasoline-powered saw used for the purpose of cutting in the effort of affecting rescues of persons entrapped, regardless of the structure or object that is entrapping them.

SCBA: Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus equipped with self-contained oxygen or compressed air supply and a mask worn by firefighters and EMTs to allow them to work in toxic atmospheres. Fire service SCBA is required to be of the positive pressure type

SCOTT: Brand name of SCBA used in Fairfax County, referred to by the brand most often when command gives instruction for all personnel to discontinue wearing air packs.

SEARCH AND RESCUE: Attempts by fire and emergency service personnel to coordinate and implement a search for a missing person and then effect a rescue.

SECOND ALARM: When an incident commander determines that the units dispatched on the initial alarm cannot handle the situation, a second or "greater" alarm is dispatched, comprised of 3 Engines, 1 Truck, 1 Medic, 1 Light/air, 1 Battalion Chief, 1 EMS Supervisor, 1 Canteen, 1 Deputy Chief, and Safety Officer. Also see Greater Alarm and Alarm.

SECOND-DEGREE BURNS: Burns affecting the entire skin structure that lies over the top of the fatty tissues and muscles causing skin to turn red and blistering of the skin.

SHELTER IN PLACE: A form of isolation that provides a level of protection while leaving people in place, usually in their homes. People are usually sheltered in place when they may be placed in further danger by an evacuation.

SHIFT LEADER: Station officer designated as the leader of his or her specific shift, regardless of Fire or EMS status of their individual rank, currently determined by length of time in rank, soon to be determined by promotional process.

SHOCK: A serious condition caused by a problem or failure of the circulatory system that result in a decrease of oxygen and vital nutrients to the body's tissues.

SHORING: Sections of wood or man made shores, in various sizes and lengths used in the efforts of rescue for both vehicle accidents and collapse rescue, such as trench collapses. See also Air Shore

SHOULDER LOAD: Hose load designed to be carried on the shoulders of firefighters.

SHUTTLE OPERATION: The cycle in which mobile water supply apparatus is dumped, moves to a fill site for refilling, and is returned to the dump site.

SIAMESE: A device that connects two or more hoselines into one line with either a clapper valve or gate valve to prevent loss of water if only one line is connected.

SIDE: Refers to the particular side of the structure the communicating unit is talking about, with Side A (Adam) being the front, continuing clockwise with B (Baker) being the left side, C (Charlie) being the rear, and D (David) being the right side.

SIZE-UP: Mental evaluation made by the officer in charge which enables him or her to determine a course of actions.

SMALL LINES OR SMALL-DIAMETER HOSE: Hose less than 2-1/2 inches (63 mm) in diameter.

SMOKE EJECTORS: See fan.

SMOKE SHOWING: Term used in the initial on-scene report of units to describe what physical condition of the incident is evident, also referred to as Light Smoke or Heavy Smoke, depending upon the volume of smoke at the scene.

SOFT SLEEVE: Refers to the large diameter hose used to hook up Engines to hydrants to provide a water supply.

SOLID STREAM NOZZLES: Type of nozzle that delivers an unbroken or solid stream of water to the fire. Also called solid tip, straight bore, or smooth bore.

SPAN: The distance between utility poles.

SPAN OF CONTROL: The ability of one individual to supervise a number of other people or units. The normal range is three to seven units or individuals, with the ideal being five.

SPANNER WRENCHES: Used to tighten or loosen couplings. They may also be useful as a pry bar, door chock, gas valve control, and for many other uses.

SPECIAL ALARM: Request for a special type of apparatus or for a specific amount of apparatus other than that normally given on a normal dispatch for the type incident.

SPINAL IMMOBILIZATION: The process of protecting a patient against further injury by securing them to a backboard or other rigid device designed to minimize movement.

SPLIT LAY: Laying of supply line in more than one direction, such as from a hydrant to the fire and from the fire to a hydrant.

SPRAIN: Injury to the ligaments that hold the body's joints together and allow them to move.

SPRINKLER SYSTEMS: Designed to automatically distribute water through sprinklers placed at set intervals on a system of piping, usually in the ceiling area, to extinguish or control the spread of fires.

SQUAD: See Rescue Company.

SQUIRT: See Tele-Squirt

STAGING AREA: Area close to, but not directly at, an incident where incoming apparatus will stand by for orders from the Incident Commander. Based on the type and nature of the incident, the Staffing Officer will determine the level of staging, with Level 1 being all unassigned units remaining at the staging area, and Level 2 being a specific amount of equipment that must be kept in reserve at the staging area at all times, usually equivalent to an entire full alarm assignment. See Level I Staging and Level II Staging.

STAGING OFFICER: With the ICS, a position responsible for organizing all apparatus not currently being used at an incident, dispatching units to the incident as directed by the Incident Commander.

STAIRWELL: An enclosed stairway attached to the side of a high-rise building or in the center core.

STANDARD OF CARE: A legal term that means for every emergency medical incident, an emergency responder should treat the patient in the same manner as another responder with the same training.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP):

Specific information and instruction on how a task or assignment is to be accomplished.

STANDPIPE: Vertical water pipe riser built into a structure to stand ready for interior fire fighting operations by providing outlets on each floor for connecting hose lines to.

STATIC: A rope having very little (less than 2 percent) elongation at normal safe working loads.

STEP CHOCKS: Specially shaped blocks of wood that are designed to fit under a vehicle that has been involved in an accident where you want to stabilize it and keep it from moving while you tend to the patients inside.

STOKES BASKET: Brand name for basket-type litter used for moving patients from various locations of incidents to a safer location, securing them inside.

STORZ COUPLINGS: Coupling used for larger diameter supply line such as 4".

STRAIGHT LAY: Routine laying of Supply Line from a hydrant to the fire.

STRAIGHT STREAM: A nozzle pattern that creates a hollow stream, similar in shape to the solid stream pattern, but the straight stream pattern must pass around the baffle of the nozzle. Newer fog nozzle designs, especially the automatic nozzles, only have this hollow effect from the tip on and, hence, create a solid stream with good reach and penetration abilities, some better than solid stream nozzles.

STRAINERS: Placed over the end of a suction hose to prevent debris from being sucked into the pump. Some strainers have a float attached to keep them at or near the water's surface. A different style of strainer or screen is located on each intake of a pump.

STRATIFICATION: The layered configuration of heat with higher temperatures at the upper levels and cooler temperatures at lower levels.

STRIKING TOOLS: The group of tools designed to deliver impact forces to break locks or drive another tool.

SUPPLY LINE: Depending upon the jurisdiction, hose line 3" to 5" in diameter used for supplying water from the water source, usually a hydrant, to another Engine "lay" out supply line. Large fires needing lots of water will often have some Engines "laying duals," meaning laying out two supply lines simultaneously.

SUPPRESSION OFFICER: Within the ICS, a position responsible for making changes in the action plan as required to combat the fire situation, provides situation updates, reports to the Operations officer.

TACTICS: The specific operations performed to satisfy the strategic goals for an incident.

TAG/GUIDE LINES: Tag lines are ropes held and controlled by firefighters on the ground or lower elevations in order to keep items being hoisted from banging against or getting caught on the structure as they are being hoisted.

TAKE UP: Instruction for personnel to break down their hose lines, pick up equipment, and return it to their apparatus, usually heard on the fireground when units have completed the entire operations.

TANKER: Apparatus designed to carry a large amount of water to fires in areas that lack fire hydrants, typically carry 2000 – 3000 gallons of water and Port-A-Tanks to drop the water into. Also referred to as a Tender

TARGET HAZARD: An occupancy that has been determined to have a greater than average life hazard or complexity of firefighting operations. Such occupancies receive a high priority I the pre-incident management process and often a higher level of first-alarm response assignment.

TASK FORCE: Local term used in Northern Virginia and DC. Refers to the apparatus complement of 2 Engines and 1 Truck, allows the Incident Commander to call for additional help without getting various specialty equipment that is usually dispatched on greater alarm requests.

TEAMWORK: A number of persons working together in an effort to reach a common goal.

TELE-SQUIRT: An Engine equipped with a remotely operated elevating articulated boom which has a pre-piped waterway and a remotely operated nozzle, generally 55' – 70' in length, the boom folds up and fits compactly on top of the Engine. Also known as Squirts.

TEMPERED GLASS: Plate glass that has been heat treated to increase its strength.

TENSILE STRENGTH: Breaking strength of a rope when a load is applied along the direction of the length, generally measured in pounds per square inch.

TERRORISM: Acts of violence that are arbitrarily committed against lives or property and intended to create fear and anxiety.

THERMAL BURNS: Burns caused by heat or hot objects.

THERMAL LEVEL: A layer of air that is of the same approximate temperature.

THIRD-DEGREE BURNS: Burns affecting not only the skin structure but the tissues and muscles underneath. Third-degree burns may be red, white, or charred in color, and will appear dry because the blood vessels in the skin are damaged extensively and are not supplying fluids to the area.

THROUGH-THE-LOCK-METHOD: A method of forcible entry in which the lock cylinder is removed by unscrewing or pulling and the internal lock mechanism is operated to open a door. Also, the family of tools used to perform this operation.

TILLER TRUCK: Refers to a type of aerial ladder truck that requires 2 people to drive the truck, one being in the cab or tractor and the second driver mounted on the trailer portion, used in many large metropolitan fire departments that have narrow streets that are difficult to maneuver larger apparatus down. In Fairfax County, they are used as reserve Trucks.

TONES: See Fire Station Alerting System

TOOL JOB: An incident requiring the use of a "Hurst Tool" to extricate someone who is entrapped, typically in auto accidents.

TOWER: Aerial apparatus equipped with an elevating platform, capable of carrying 2 to 4 people, in order to move them to a safer place from the previously elevated position they may have been in.

TOWER LADDER: See Tower.

TOXICITY: Poisonous level of substance.

TOXINS: Disease-causing materials that are extremely toxic and in some cases more toxic than other warfare agents such as nerve agents.

TRANSPORTATION OFFICER: Within the ICS, a position responsible for coordination of patient transportation to various medical facilities, arrange for vehicles to move patients from the incident scene, reports to the Incident Commander.

TRASH LINE: Line typically carried on the front of an Engine consisting of 100 – 150' of 1 3/4" hose. Used primarily for small dumpster fires, outside fires, vehicles fires etc.

TREATMENT OFFICER: Within the ICS, a position responsible for overseeing the emergency treatment of patients, includes working closely with the Triage and Disposition Officers, reports to the EMS Control Officer.

TRIAGE: Denotes the process of determining the priority of patients on a multiple-casualty incident, patients are tagged with colored tags based on their severity and need for immediate transportation.

TRIAGE OFFICER: Within the ICS, a position responsible for coordination of the assessment of patients according to the severity and directs them to an area for proper care, reports to the EMS Control Officer.

TRIAGE TAG: Tags used in Mass Casualty Incident and placed on patients to designate the relative severity of the injured. See Black Tag, Green Tag, Grey Tag, and Yellow Tag.

TROT: Technical Rescue Operations Team – Fire Department personnel that are specifically trained to deal with rescue situations that involve persons trapped or in precarious positions and unable to free themselves.

TRSU: TECHNICAL RESCUE SUPPORT UNIT. Small moving van-type vehicle which carries additional equipment in support of the Cave-In response team.

TRUCK: Aerial apparatus equipped with a large variety of tools, ladders, and appliances, as well as a large permanently-mounted aerial ladder, 95' to 135' in length.

TRUCK COMPANY: The unit designation of a group of firefighters assigned to perform tactics and functions such as forcible entry, search and rescue, ventilations, etc.

TRUSS: A rigid framework using the triangle as its basic shape.

TUNNEL VISION: The focus of attention on a particular problem with out proper regard for possible consequences or alternative approaches. Also known as "The Big Eye"

TUNNELING: The digging and debris removal accompanied by appropriate shoring to safely move through or under a pile of debris at a structural collapse incident.

TURN-OUT GEAR: Protective clothing worn by fire department personnel while working at incidents.

TURNTABLE: The rotating platform of a ladder that affords an elevating ladder device the ability to turn to any target from a fixed position.

TWO-AND-A-HALF: Large hand-held fire attack hose refers to the size in diameter.

TWO IN / TWO OUT: The procedure of having a crew standing by completely prepared to immediately enter a structure to rescue the interior crew should a problem develop.

UNIFORMED FIRE OFFICER (UFO): Fire Department officer usually at the rank of Lieutenant who provides tactical supervision and control of the communications operations performed for the Fire and Rescue Department within the Public Safety Communications Center, responsible for making any notifications to Fire Department staff for various reasons.

UPPER EXPLOSIVE LIMIT (UEL): The upper part of the flammable range. Above the UEL, fire or an explosion cannot occur because there is too much fuel and not enough oxygen.

UTILITIES: Refers to the main service utilities normally found in businesses or residences, such as electricity, gas, phone, sewer, etc.

UTILITY: General purpose fire department vehicle which is frequently equipped with minimal tools and is used for transporting personnel.

UTILITY ROPE: Rope used for utility purposes only. Some of the tasks utility ropes are used for in most every fire department are hoisting tools and equipment, cordoning off areas, stabilizing objects, and ladder halyards.

VEINS: The blood vessels, or tubes, within the body that carry blood lacking oxygen and nutrients back to the heart.

VENEER: A covering or facing, not a load-bearing wall, usually with brick or stone.

VENOUS BLEEDING: Bleeding from a vein.

VENTILATE: Opening up of a structure for the purpose of allowing heat, smoke, and gases trapped inside to escape into the atmosphere, allowing firefighters to see their operations and extinguish the fire, can be performed in several different manners, open doors and windows, skylights, creating openings in roofs, stairwells in buildings, etc.

VERTICAL VENTILATION: Channeled pathway for fire ventilation via vertical openings.

VISQUEEN: A trade name for black plastic. It can be used very effectively in salvage and overhaul operations.

VOIDS: Spaces within a collapsed area that are open and may be an area where someone could survive a building collapse.

WARM ZONE: A designated area of a hazardous materials incident where entry to and exit from the hot zone takes place, DECON is located in the warm zone.

WATER HAMMER: A sudden surge of pressure created by the quick opening or closing of valves in a water system. The surge is capable of damaging piping and valves.

WATER SUPPLY OFFICER: Within the ICS, position responsible for maintaining an adequate water supply, used in the extinguishment phase or for the protection of possible exposures, reports directly to the Incident Commander.

WATER THIEF: A variation of the wye that has one inlet and one outlet of the same size plus two smaller outlets with all of the outlets being gated. The standard water thief usually has 1½ - inch (65 mm) inlet with one 2½ inch (65 mm) and two 1½ inch (38 mm) outlets.

WAYBILL: A term that may be used in conjunction with consist, but is a description of what is on a specific railcar.

WEBBING: Nylon strapping, available in tubular and flat construction methods.

WELFARE OFFICER: Within the CIS, a position responsible for providing an organized response for the well-being of civilian evacuees on an incident, established refuge areas and/or evacuation centers.

WET CHEMICAL: Extinguishing agents that are water-based solutions of potassium carbonate-based chemicals, potassium acetate-based chemicals, or potassium citrate-based chemicals or a combination.

WET PIPE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS: Has automatic sprinklers attached to pipes with water under pressure all the time.

WHEEL CHOCKS: Curved pieces of metal or rubber that are designed to placed under the wheels of fire apparatus to prevent movement in the event the brakes were to fail.

WYE: A device that divides one hoseline into two or more. The wye lines may be the same size or smaller size and the wye may or may not have gate control valves to control the water flow.

YELLOW TAG: (1) Term used to identify a severely injured patient. Example: Engine 822 to Fairfax, we have 2 Yellow Tag patients. (3) Triage Tag used to mark a severely injured patient during a Mass Casualty Incident as needing rapid treatment and transport. A Yellow Tag is more critical than a Green Tag but not as critical as a Red Tag.

ZODIAC BOAT: Brand name boat used by the Fire Department. It is small, lightweight, and inflatable, easily maneuverable in water.

ZONE: An area established and identified for a specific reason, typically because a hazard exists within the zone. The zones are usually referred to as hot, warm, and cold zones and provide an indication of the expected hazard in each zone. Sometimes referred to as a sector.