9.15 Mayday and Hostile Acts Radio Signals Operational Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) To describe the situations that will prompt the use of Mayday and radio signals and the actions that shall be taken when a mayday or signal call is used.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure (SOP) applies to all CFA members attending fires and incidents.

Section 3 - Procedure

Radio Signals

(3) The following table outlines the CFA radio signals covered by this Procedure.

Signal	Pronunciation	Meaning
Mayday	May Day May Day May Day	A situation where a CFA crew or member believes they or others are in a situation of grave and/or life threatening danger.
5-5	Fife Fife	A hostile act, either actual or potential, with significant violence or terrorism Note: VicPol will be automatically notified Example: Crews/community under attack. One or more perpetrators. Weapons ranging from rudimentary to complex. Bat, knife, automatic weapons, explosives.
4-0	Four Zero	Urgent police attendance required, crew(s) or public under threat. Example: Perpetrator on scene threatening crews/public with abuse or physical violence. Notifications to police via a Signal 4-0 are discreet notifications and will not require acknowledgement from VicFire. This ensures safety is not further compromised on the fireground with acknowledgements that could be heard by the perpetrator via our radios and communications devices on appliances i.e. external speakers.
5-6	Fife Six	Police attendance required (non-urgent) Example: Police requested to assist an individual that has been assaulted. Perpetrator not on scene.
8-3	Eight Three	Deceased person
2-7	Two Seven	Critical Incident Stress Team / Peer Support required

Mayday Signal

(4) The message “Mayday Mayday Mayday” must be transmitted immediately by a CFA member(s) who believes they or others are in a situation of grave and/or life threatening danger.

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Actions to undertake by a CFA member making a Mayday call

(5) To initiate the Mayday procedure, CFA members must:

a. Press and hold the duress button (if fitted) for 3 seconds on the CFA radio.
b. Press the "Press to Talk" key and initiate a Mayday message by immediately transmitting the following:
    i. Mayday Mayday Mayday;
    ii. Your call sign;
    iii. Your location;
    iv. A summary of the situation you are in; and
    v. What assistance you require.

(6) On hearing a Mayday call, all other radio traffic shall cease and only resources within the immediate vicinity shall render assistance at the direction of the Crew Leader and/or Incident Controller. All other crews shall continue to combat the fire or incident.

Actions required by Firecom

(7) Upon receiving a Mayday communication from the fire ground, Firecom will:

a. Acknowledge and record the message and direct all other brigades to 'wait out'.
b. Advise the Incident Controller through the chain of command of the message and follow all instructions of the Incident Controller to support those in distress including the dispatch of emergency services to the control point.

Actions required by the Incident Controller or Next in Charge

(8) In some circumstances, CFA members might be operating on a channel not monitored by Firecom or the Incident Controller such as a Fireground or Sector Channel. In the absence of an Incident Controller or Firecom, the Next in Charge (usually a Crew Leader, Strike Team Leader or Sector Commander) should take initial control of the Mayday call and escalate to the Incident Controller as soon as practicable. Once notified the Incident Controller should then take control.

(9) The Incident Controller has the responsibility to manage the mayday call by ensuring they complete the following actions:

a. Confirm the details provided by the caller;
b. Commit resources to the rescue;
c. Establish a rescue sector;
d. Allocate appropriate radio channels to the rescue and the rest of the fire or incident;
e. Issue a general message or red flag warning if appropriate to the fire/incident ground;
f. Secure the area and appoint appropriate resources.

(10) The Incident Controller must ensure the following are notified of the Mayday call:

a. State Duty Officer (or District Duty Officer if uncoupled from State arrangements);
b. Regional Controller, if in line of control arrangements.

(11) Once the rescue is complete, the Incident Controller shall:

a. conclude the mayday call. This shall be communicated via briefings and broadcasting a general message on all

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incident channels; and

b. ensure welfare and support services are provided to all CFA members involved in the Mayday call.

Actions required by the State Duty Officer

(12) The State Duty Officer must ensure the following personnel are notified in the event of a Mayday call:

a. Regional Agency Commander (RAC) (if initiated).
b. State Agency Commander (SAC).

Interoperability – Mayday

(13) The following table outlines the call signs used by other fire agencies for a Mayday call.

Agency	Mayday equivalent call sign
Ambulance Victoria (AV)	Ambulance Victoria utilise the radio duress button.
Forest Fire Management Vic (FFMV)	"Mayday mayday mayday"
Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)	"Red red red" to break in on radio transmission with an urgent call; and "Mayday mayday mayday" for life threatening situations. FRV also utilise the 'signals' outlined in clause 3.
VICSES (SES)	"Mayday mayday mayday" or "PAN PAN" Marine / Boating Emergency. VICSES also utilise the 'signals' outlined in clause 3.
Victoria Police (VicPol)	"Code 9" or "Urgent".
Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW)	"Mayday mayday mayday"
NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)	"Emergency emergency"
SA Country Fire Service (CFS)	"Check check check" is used to break in on radio transmission with an urgent call; and "Mayday mayday mayday" for life-threatening situations.

Hostile Acts Signal

(14) These signals relate directly to volatile scenarios that CFA members may encounter when attending fires/incidents. Whilst the first reaction is always to want to access a scene and render assistance, in certain circumstances the best course of action may be to withdraw to a safe location and await further assistance. Otherwise, conduct a dynamic risk assessment (DRA) and consider the need to limit your operational activities and commitment as well as limit the exposure to as few people as necessary.

Actions required by FIRECOM

(15) Upon receiving a signal 5-5, 4-0 or 2-7 communication (as outlined in Clause 3) from the fire ground, FIRECOM will:

a. Notify the District Duty Officer (DDO) or State Duty Officer (SDO).
b. Notify the police for a Signal 4-0. Notifications to police via a Signal 4-0 are discreet and do not require radio acknowledgment from FIRECOM. This ensures safety is not further compromised on the fire ground with acknowledgments that could be heard by the perpetrator via our radios and communications devices on CFA vehicles i.e. external speakers.

(16) In some circumstances, CFA members might be operating on a channel not monitored by Firecom or the Incident Controller such as a Fireground or Sector Channel. In the absence of Firecom, the Incident Controller or Next in Charge should take initial control of the signal call and notify Firecom as soon as practicable.

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Actions Required by the State Duty Officer/District Duty Officer

(17) The SDO/DDO should make contact with the Incident Controller to ascertain what the situation is and what assistance can be provided and if additional personnel is required to attend the scene.

Actions required by the Incident Controller

(18) Always consider the safety of CFA members first.

(19) Provide a situation report to Firecom, where safe to do so.

(20) Prior to re-commencing operations undertake a dynamic risk assessment with consideration for the following:

a. The need to re-enter the location.
b. Positioning crews and vehicles in such a way that they can rapidly and efficiently withdraw if required.
c. Not allowing crew members to work in isolation where any uncertainty exists about the situation being encountered.

Safety Notes

(21) Updates may be made to processes in this procedure following the conclusion of the radio rollout program.

Environmental Notes

(22) Nil

Section 4 - Definitions

(23) Commonly defined terms are located in the CFA centralised glossary. Document-specific definitions are listed below.

Section 5 - Related Documents

(24) Chief Officer's SOP – 9.32 Bushfire – Entrapment Procedures for Appliances

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Status and Details

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Accountable Officer	Garry Cook Deputy Chief Officer Operational Response & Coordination
Responsible Officer	Jason Lawrence Assistant Chief Fire Officer Operational Communications
Author	Tracey Parkhill
Enquiries Contact	Garry Cook Deputy Chief Officer Operational Response & Coordination Operational Communications

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"CFA member" - Refers to all CFA volunteers, volunteer auxiliary workers, officers, employees and secondees.

"CFA vehicle" - All vehicles owned or operated by CFA or any Group or Brigade. This includes FRV vehicles being driven by an FRV Secondee.

"Next in Charge" - Next in Charge - the supervisor or manager directly in charge of a CFA member or Labour Hire Contractor e.g. for a volunteer this would be a Lieutenant, Captain, Deputy Group Officer, Group Officer or Commander; for an employee / labour hire contractor this would be their direct manager.

"Crew Leader" - Crew Leader is the person designated to have responsibility for the management of the crew.

"Firecom" - The callsign for day to day / normal radio communications to CFA vehicles and aircraft.

"Mayday" - A call via radio that indicates “I am threatened by grave and imminent danger and request immediate assistance.”

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