

## **HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT**

*This document is laid out in a style that is similar to your EMS Standing Orders. We have included protocols, performance guidelines, plans, and a section for Acronyms and Definitions. **Below is a list of FAQ's that should help ensure you are getting the most out of this resource.***

### **What is a Protocol?**

For our purposes a protocol can be considered a blend of policy and procedure. There are several types of protocols included within this book. We have included protocols for **call types** that you will be dispatched to, for **high risk skills** (tactics) you will be asked to perform and protocols for various **situations** that arise when responding to incidents. We also have included **facility specific** protocols. If staff has developed specific response protocols (radio frequency, arrival locations, staging plans etc.) for a given location we have transitioned those into this format. Anytime you see a protocol on a given topic you can be sure that your organization wants to provide parameters which should increase your safety and help ensure a consistent delivery of service. **Protocols are formatted to be an enroute and on-scene resource for you.**

### **What is a Performance Guideline?**

A Performance Guideline will sometimes be designed as a step-by-guideline and other times will read more as a general list of considerations for a particular skill or task. Performance Guidelines will generally be **more of a training resource** and your go-to for equipment set-up/layout. Where Protocols can more easily be an on-scene resource **Performance Guidelines really are best used in training, skill development, and evaluation.**

### **Why are some skills Protocols and other Performance Guidelines?**

Risk. Where the consequences of something going wrong are high or the discretionary time to make critical decisions is limited you will see a protocol. If a skill has a lot of mandates from our trainers (terms like shall, always, will, shall not, etc.) those parts will be in the protocol and the considerations and "what-ifs" and "teaching points" will likely be in the Performance Guideline.

### **Why do some things have both a Protocol and a Performance Guideline?**

Because some things we do are really complicated and very dynamic. Almost every fire ground skill can be performed differently under different circumstance and scene conditions. Take **search** for example. The Performance Guideline is a great place to go to read more into the whys and "what ifs" when considering different search techniques. The Protocol for a particular search type both summarizes the key points but also clearly defines any mandates we shall follow when performing one of the options described in the search Performance Guideline.

### **Are these documents replacing policy?**

Throughout this book we have referenced existing policy. Some Protocols include almost all of the content of an existing policy, others include just some key points. Consider them like field references. We have done this so that you can meet your organizations needs in the field when you don't have time or the ability to access your policy manual. We do not believe any conflict exist between this resource and those documents. Examples include apparatus backing and highway response.

### **I'm not on the HAZMAT team or the TRT, should I care about the plans in the back?**

Yep, but maybe a little less than a team member does. They are included here so we have on-scene reference and they provide training consistency. Non-team members are consistently utilized on these types of scenes and increased knowledge and skill is very important. An engine company may not be asked to perform a high-angle rescue alone or enter the hot-zone of a HAZMAT but they will surely be asked to help rig the system or set-up the decon corridor. This is where you can go to be ready.

### **What if I deviate from something written in this book?**

Well that depends. We need Chiefs, Company Officers, Engineers, and Firefighters who can think, react, and perform under very dynamic and inconsistent circumstances. Sometimes the plan, protocol, or guideline will not work, plain and simple. Be ready to answer the question of "why" you did what you did. Other times your actions are very clearly mandated, in this case compliance is critical for your safety and the safety of others.

### **Who/what does the term District refer to in this document?**

The Fire Chiefs have agreed that for our purposes the term "District" will be the combined area served by Medford Fire-Rescue and Fire District 3. When something is specifically listed as only regarding MFR or only occurring in the city it will be clearly noted. Otherwise the "District" is all encompassing.

### **Throughout this document riding position roles are defined, is that mandatory?**

No it isn't mandatory, but it wasn't accidental either. In most cases our training leads have developed a pre-plan for roles at the incident given a team of three or four members. They have evaluated the steps, tasks, roles, and general pieces of a given operation and are providing you a starting place for how a company would most efficiently accomplish the task. If you have a better way or want to mix up the roles - go for it. Just remember you are still responsible to accomplish what the protocol mandates. Additionally, other companies and firefighters (i.e. floaters or people on OT or exchange) will probably be expecting what is listed here, if you change it up be sure to communicate with other around you on the scene.

**This thing is way too specific, things will surely change and then this will be outdated.**

The specificity you will find here is intentional, as is the commitment to keeping this document alive. We see little value in a generic document. For example, some policy manuals tell you to do something but don't tell you how or give the specific information you need for fear of having to update it later. This is the opposite. The TF / ST protocol is specific for the coming summer; we'll update it each year. The airport response protocol is very specific, if gate locations change – we will change the document to reflect it. If an emergency update is necessary you will be informed.

**How can I possibly learn or remember nearly 60 protocols and 50 performance guidelines?**

You probably will never have this thing memorized and that is OK. Over time we do anticipate that our people will become familiar with these orders and they will become engrained into our operations.

There is some good news however– it is likely that you will not need more than a couple protocols on any given incident and if you must look something up – go for it. The second piece of good news is that while not all of this content was previously written as a policy, Ops Guideline, Admin Guideline, Performance Guideline, or Methods Manual policy/procedure, most of this stuff has long been the practice of MFR and FD3 or best practices in our industry.

In other words – you are likely already doing most of this!

**Fire Rescue Standing Orders Review Committee**

The review committee will meet annually to review the Standing Orders and any suggestions submitted by our members. This entire resource will be reviewed and updated as necessary and we will work with staff, training leads, and other interested members; your participation is encouraged and needed! We will issue a new set of Standing Orders on the website effective July 1 of each year and additional resources (books or binders) will be the responsibility of each agency. **The website is the default location for the most up-to-date information we have.**

**How to contribute:**

Email your ideas for improvement, content suggestions, questions, input, errors, new protocols, new performance guidelines, definitions, or anything to make this document better to: [rvfrso@gmail.com](mailto:rvfrso@gmail.com)