

# Polson City/Rural FIRE DEPARTMENT Operating Guidelines

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## 307.00 Emergency Evacuation Signal

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### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this procedure is to assure that all personnel operating at the scene of an emergency can be alerted to a change in conditions that can affect their safety, and can then evacuate to a safe location.

### **Scope:**

This procedure shall apply to all personnel operating at the scene of any emergency incident.

### **Implementation:**

The Incident Commander and the Safety Officer are responsible for implementing this procedure according to the guidelines presented in this procedure. Everyone operating at the scene of an emergency has the responsibility to pay attention to developing conditions and to inform superior officers of any dangerous conditions that are discovered or observed.

### **Definition:**

For the purpose of this procedure the EMERGENCY evacuation of a structure shall mean an evacuation that is initiated by the incident commander or the incident safety officer because conditions are believed to pose an immediate and direct threat to the safety of personnel. An EMERGENCY evacuation is to be ordered only when personnel are in imminent danger.

An EMERGENCY evacuation should not be confused with an orderly withdrawal from positions that is ordered during a shift from an offensive to a defensive mode of operation, or other non-critical adjustment of forces.

### **Observation of Conditions:**

All companies must communicate current information on the conditions in their operating area to sector officers. They should be particularly alert to the following conditions:

- High heat conditions that could signal an impending flashover.
- Large volumes of smoke with an absence of a corresponding volume of flame; pulsing smoke that is alternately pushed from the building and then drawn back into the building; condensation of brownish liquid on the inside of windows. All of these are signs of an impending backdraft.

- Cracks, bowing or sagging of roofs, walls or important building members that could affect the stability of the structure.
- Any other conditions that pose an immediate threat to the safety of personnel operating on the fireground.

**Retreat and Evacuation Procedures:**

When a condition that seriously affects the safety of operating personnel is detected, the sector or incident commander shall be notified immediately along with a recommended course of action. At the same time steps shall be taken to remove threatened personnel from the danger area.

If conditions are such that total EMERGENCY evacuation of the building is necessary the incident commander or the safety officer shall initiate the retreat signal. The retreat signal shall be as follows:

- The initiating officer shall broadcast "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" over the fire ground radio frequency(s).

The Dispatcher shall precede the evacuation message with an alert tone of about five (5) seconds. On hearing the "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" broadcast all others on the frequency shall maintain radio silence. As an example, the officer shall then broadcast the message "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC - ALL PERSONNEL EVACUATE THE BUILDING." This message shall be repeated a minimum of three times.

- On hearing the "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC - ALL PERSONNEL EVACUATE THE BUILDING" message, all apparatus drivers shall immediately activate the air horns and sirens on the apparatus in operation for a minimum of twenty seconds. If personnel who are not radio equipped hear this signal they shall immediately initiate evacuation and retreat procedures. The objective is the personal safety of the firefighter. Equipment should be withdrawn only if it is required to assist the firefighter in his evacuation. After exiting the structure all personnel shall proceed outside the safety perimeter where company and sector officers shall immediately initiate a PAR (Personnel Accountability Report) using established departmental procedures for accounting for personnel on the fire ground.