Bath Township Fire Department			Standard Operating Guideline	
Section Safety	**Referral No.** S-20	**Subject:** Rules of Engagement	**Date Issued** 4/08	**Date Revised**

Purpose:

- The objective of "rules of engagement" is to provide parameters for decision-making and action, especially at incidents to minimize the potential for the injury, duty related illness or death of a Fire Department member.
- The objective of this SOG is to identify "rules of engagement" for incidents that pose a safety risk to members responding.

Scope:

- This standard operating guideline shall apply to all personnel.

Responsibilities:

- Officer
  - Conducting a risk assessment at every incident, with an associated plan to minimize those risks.
  - Maintain knowledge of safety related SOGs and standard practices, so as to minimize the potential for the injury, duty related illness or death of those that they supervise.
- Personnel
  - All personnel are responsible for:
    - Their own safety as well as the safety of those working with them.
    - Continuously identifying and stopping unsafe actions.
    - Reporting unsafe actions to their immediate supervisor or nearest most accessible IMS management element.
    - Maintaining knowledge of safety related SOGs and standard practices, so as to minimize the potential for the injury, duty related illness or death of themselves or those they work with.

Statement of Policy:

- Though the mission of the Fire Department involves response to emergency incidents, the preservation of the life (including those of Fire Department members) is paramount.
  - **No property is worth the life of a member of the Fire Department.**
  - **Fire department members shall NOT be committed to interior firefighting operations in any structure that is obviously abandoned, derelict, known or reasonably believed to be unoccupied.**
  - **Fire department members shall NOT make entry into a hazardous environment without the material or substance being identified for other**

than life saving purposes and then only with appropriate training and equipment.

- **Fire department members shall NOT make entry into a un-shored collapsed structure or trench for other than immediately life safety reasons, and then only with appropriate training and equipment.**

- A basic level of risk is recognized and accepted, in a measured and controlled manner, in efforts that are routinely employed to save lives and property; however
  - No level of risk to responders is acceptable in situations where there is no potential to save lives or property.
  - A higher level of risk is acceptable ONLY when there is a realistic potential to save known endangered lives.
  - This elevated risk shall be limited to operations that are specifically directed towards rescue and where there is a realistic potential to save person(s) known to be in danger.
- Evaluation of safety conditions shall be an on going and a part of all tactical and strategic decision making at an incident or training session simulating incident conditions.
- Communication of safety related information is required by ALL members:
  - Members functioning in a supervisory role at the scene of an emergency shall accept an act upon all safety related information as soon as practical to make the scene safer.
  - The questioning of orders or directives that appear to the recipient to be unsafe is REQUIRED, PRIOR to taking such actions.
  - If an action appears to be unsafe it is to be questioned IMMEDIATELY.
- The questioning of orders or directives shall address a stated concern, therefore giving the supervisor information to assess the question.
- If there is a continued lack of agreement on whether to proceed based on the safety risks:
  - The action shall not be taken by the work group with the question; and
  - The next level of supervision is to be immediately notified of the issue in question; and alternate methods of accomplishing the task in question shall be considered.
- **ANY MEMBER is authorized to not follow a directive that is in violation of a safety related SOG or standard practice.**

Disciplinary action and safety information:

- Disciplinary action SHALL NOT be taken against any member questioning an unsafe action at an emergency that could obviously be expected to cause injury to themselves or members of their work group.
- Disciplinary action MAY be taken against any member questioning an unsafe action at an emergency if the concern is presented in what would obviously be determined as an insubordinate or disrespectful manner.

- Disciplinary action SHALL be taken against any member who is found to have:
  - Intentionally violated safety directives at an incident.
  - Intentionally given a directive that violates a safety related SOG or standard practice, whether it results in the injury of a member or not.
  - Questioned a perceived unsafe action at any time if it is obviously in an insubordinate or disrespectful manner.

Guidelines:

- Risk Assessment for Firefighting shall include the following as a minimum:
  - Building/Container Characteristics
  - Construction type and size
  - Structural condition
  - Occupancy and/or contents
  - Fire Factors
  - Location and extent of fire
  - Estimated time of involvement
  - Smoke conditions
  - Volume
  - Velocity
  - Color
  - Density
  - Risk to Occupants
  - Known or probable occupants
  - Occupant survival profile
  - Firefighting Capabilities
  - Available resources
  - Operational capabilities and limitations
- Risk Assessment for Emergency Medical operations shall include a scene survey for, but not be limited to:
  - Traffic hazards
  - Structural hazards
  - Visible signs of violence or potential violence, especially situations that could escalate to involve responders.
- Survey the patient for:
  - Weapons or other items that could injure responders
  - Obvious signs of blood borne pathogens
- Evaluate information acquired for:

  - Unseen hazards to responders
  - Potential situations that could pose a risk to responders
- Risk Assessment for Hazardous Material operations shall include but not be limited to:
  - Identification of chemicals or materials involved
  - Potential that chemicals or materials involved may increase the risk to responders if they escape their current container or react to the surrounding environment
- Risk Assessment for Technical Rescue operations shall include but not be limited to:
  - Evaluation of training and equipment of the members on scene to affect rescue
  - Evaluation of the availability of "non-entry" rescue options
  - Evaluation of time invested in rescue operations and the viability of rescue vs. the need to shift to recovery operations

STRUCTURED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

- WE MAY RISK OUR LIVES A LOT TO PROTECT SAVABLE LIVES
- WE MAY RISK OUR LIVES A LITTLE TO PROTECT SAVABLE PROPERTY
- WE WILL NOT RISK OUR LIVES AT ALL TO SAVE WHAT IS ALREADY LOST