

## Using Breathing Apparatus with four firefighters

National operational guidance presents a framework for a safe system of work for operations at incidents where the use of Breathing Apparatus is required. It provides robust, yet flexible guidance that can be adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of the organisation and the incident. The guidance facilitates professional good practice to enhance the safety of firefighters and achieve successful outcomes in saving life and protecting property.

The use of Breathing Apparatus represents a safety control measure that allows firefighters to breathe in atmospheres that are oxygen deficient, toxic, and hazardous during Fire and Rescue Service operations. There is a need to provide a suitable and sufficient safe system of work to protect firefighters deployed wearing Breathing Apparatus.

The Incident Commander will only deploy Breathing Apparatus following identification of the operational outcomes and objectives to be achieved and a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks involved, and the employment of suitable and sufficient risk control measures.

On arrival at an incident the Incident Commander will need to assess the risk, including the level of resources required to execute the full operational plan and, based on the resources immediately available, make a calculated decision on the appropriate level of Breathing Apparatus.

A Breathing Apparatus team must be fully briefed by the Incident Commander prior to deployment into the risk area. The Breathing Apparatus team must receive and confirm a clear, concise briefing and instructions. This must include, for example, the task to be achieved, information as to the risks presented, safety and control measures, communications methodologies and protocols, etc.

Initial/rapid deployment of Breathing Apparatus may be used where the resources available are limited at the time of arrival to deliver the full operational plan [i.e. a crew of four], but where there exists an opportunity to preserve life or take action that will prevent an incident deteriorating if the Incident Commander were to wait for additional resources. Any deployment under these conditions should be managed under Stage I entry control procedures.

Stage I BA entry control procedures will apply where: the incident and any structures involved are small, limited and not complex [i.e. a domestic property not a large commercial or industrial property].

*Fire and Rescue Authority – Operational Guidance Breathing Apparatus*

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