



# ANN ARBOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Standard Operating Procedures – 3.19 Rule of Air Management



### RULE OF AIR MANAGEMENT

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Effective: September 20, 2018  
 Scheduled Review: September 20, 2021  
 Replaces: 810 Air Management  
 Approved: Fire Chief Mike Kennedy

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#### I. PURPOSE

Air management is critical to the health and safety of our members. Firefighters need to continuously monitor and manage their air supply. It is no longer acceptable for firefighters to work in hazardous atmospheres until their Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) low-air warning bell begins to ring.

Firefighters shall exit the fire building or hazardous atmosphere before their low air warning bell begins ringing. By doing so, the firefighter is allowed a greater safety margin by conserving an increased volume of air in reserve. A low-air warning bell ringing at an emergency scene is an audible warning that a firefighter may be in trouble.

#### II. PROCEDURE

It is the expectation that all members using SCBAs will:

- A. Check their air levels before they enter the hazardous atmosphere. Members must have a minimum of 4050 psi in their cylinder in order to make initial entry into a hazardous atmosphere.
- B. Follow the Rule of Air Management when operating in any hazardous atmosphere.
- C. When the first member of any crew/group/team has their 50% Heads-Up Display (HUD) light activate (one flashing amber light), the officer/group/team leader shall report to the proper ICS functionary, e.g., command, division, etc., that the crew/group/team is at 50% air. This report should be in the CAN (conditions, actions, needs) format. This allows the ICS functionary to pre-plan for replacing that crew/group/team in the hazardous atmosphere.
- D. If a crew/group/team member works into their reserve air (flashing red light) and their low-air warning bell begins to ring in the hazard area, the officer/group/team leader shall report over the radio to the proper ICS functionary their unit, their location, that a team member's low-air warning bell is ringing and an estimation of how close they are to the exit.

#### III. HOW AIR MANAGEMENT WORKS

Air management is each firefighter's responsibility and is closely related to situational awareness. Firefighters will have a full cylinder before they initially enter the hazardous atmosphere. Once inside the hazardous atmosphere, firefighters must continuously monitor their air supply and inform their officer/group/team leader the status of their air situation.



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The officer in charge/group/team leader should take the lead in air management. Officers, group and/or team leaders must make the decision when to exit so that the team is out of the hazardous atmosphere before their team's low-air warning bells begin to ring. There are many factors that affect the duration of the a crew's/group's/team's air supply, such as: fire conditions, work rates, aerobic fitness of the team members, and stress.

If members hear a low-air warning bell ringing in the hazardous atmosphere, and there is not an immediate radio report from the team whose bell is ringing, that bell should be considered an emergency alarm until proven otherwise.