5.01 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the identification and management of immediate life threatening conditions at the scene of an incident that on-scene emergency personnel and other responders do not have the capabilities, tools, or training to immediately mitigate. These life-threatening conditions may include, but are not limited to:

- Downed Power Lines
- Energized Electrical Equipment
- Ruptured Gas Lines
- Ammunition
- Large Holes (trenches, empty and/or unfenced swimming pools, etc.), Unstable/uneven Terrain
- Objects or Structural Areas that may Fall or Collapse

5.02 SCOPE

All Sonoma County Fire (County Fire) paid and volunteer staff.

5.03 POLICY

If a life hazard is discovered on an incident or it is broadcast while en route by the communications center, it shall be the policy that personnel adhere to the procedures contained herein.

5.04 DEFINITIONS

**Life Hazard:** The existence of a process or condition that would likely cause serious injury or death to exposed persons.

**Life Hazard Zones:** A system of barriers surrounding designated areas at the incident scene that is intended to STOP fire personnel and other responders from entering a potentially Life Threatening Hazardous Area.

**Safety Officer:** A qualified person in a location where they can safely observe a life hazard, monitor resources and personnel in the area, and communicate with resources keeping them a safe distance away.

**Life Hazard Lookout:** A person assigned to safely observe a Life Safety Zone, monitor resources and personnel in the area and communicate with resources keeping them a safe distance away. The Life Hazard Lookout will isolate and deny entry to any responder or resource until the life hazard is mitigated and the Incident Commander approves the release of the Life Hazard Zone.
5.05 PROCEDURES

1. Recognition of a Life Hazard and Initial Actions:

   a. Whenever a life hazard is present, and is immediate threat to the health and safety of incident personnel is present at an incident, any person who recognizes the potential life hazard shall immediately contact the Incident Commander (IC) using "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" to advise the IC of the situation. This notification should include:

   - Type/Nature of the hazardous condition (i.e. downed electrical wires, imminent building collapse, etc.)
   - Specific location
   - Current actions
   - Resource needs

   b. The IC shall broadcast to all personnel on the scene that a life hazard exists and the location of the hazard. The IC shall insure that the message has been received by all on-scene personnel via radio check back. The IC shall then instruct the dispatch center to broadcast the information about the hazard to all units still responding to the scene.

   c. The IC shall request the appropriate resource or agency to respond to the incident to evaluate and mitigate the life hazard (i.e., Utility Company, Structural Engineer, etc.) and assign an on scene firefighter to act as a Safety Officer until Life Hazard Zone(s) are established.

   d. The Safety Officer shall position in such a way as to be able to prevent any incident personnel from entering the area until such time as the procedures below have been completed.

   e. At the discretion of the Incident Commander, the Safety Officer may be relieved by a Life Hazard Lookout or rapid intervention crew providing that the RIC is fully functional.

2. Identification of Life Hazard Zones

   a. Deploy barrier tape to prevent entry and identify the hazard zone. The optimal tape would be 3 inch wide, red, and contain the word "DANGER" in black letters. However, common fire line or police perimeter tape that includes the words "Do Not Enter", "Do Not Cross" or similar terminology will meet this standard if that's all that is available at the time.

   b. The tape shall be configured in three horizontal strands approximately 18 to 24 inches apart and securely fixed to stationary supports to establish the LIFE HAZARD ZONE. The LIFE HAZARD ZONE barrier shall be of sufficient size to provide complete isolation, distance and protection from the hazard, and supports shall be capable of supporting the barrier tape throughout the incident.

   c. If, for whatever reason, it is not possible to completely surround the hazard with barrier
tape or to effectively stretch three strands due to geographical or other limiting factors, deploy tape as close to what is described above, especially in areas where movement of personnel is most likely. In situations where barrier tape cannot completely surround a hazard or cannot be configured in three strands, it may be necessary to keep one or more Safety Officers and assistants posted. The I.C. must approve any tape configuration that falls short of the optimum.

d. The use of illumination is recommended to enhance nighttime visibility to further identify the LIFE HAZARD ZONE. Examples could include orange cones with a flashing strobe light on the ground or glow sticks securely attached to the barrier tape, but spotlights or scene lights illuminating the area and/or barrier tape will suffice if that is all that's available.

e. When the hazard is suitably flagged, the Safety Officer may be re-assigned if safe to do so.

5.06 REFERENCES

ICS -910 Firescope - "Fire Incident Safety and Accountability Guidelines"