

**STRUCTURE FIRE (GENERAL)**

**Purposes:**

- A. To provide a means of suppressing fires when they occur within a structure.
- B. To establish guidelines so that all personnel shall have a clear understanding of their responsibilities at the scene of a structure fire.

**Guidelines:**

- A. Upon Arrival
  - 1. The first in officer shall give a brief condition report.
    - a. Number of stories.
    - b. Type of structure.
    - c. What is showing?
    - d. From what side is the problem showing?
    - e. Report on exposures.
    - f. Who is in command?
  - 2. Conduct an on the spot size-up.
    - a. What have I got?
    - b. What is burning?
    - c. Where is it going?
    - d. What (and who) is in its way?
    - e. Do I need additional help?
  - 3. The first arriving officer shall take command.
- B. Communications and Coordination – Good communication and proper coordination are essential at structure fires.
  - 1. The Incident Commander must provide the necessary coordination of the various fireground activities.
  - 2. The Incident Commander must communicate all instructions and vital information clearly to those who he is supervising.
- C. Tactical Considerations – The tactical objectives in fighting a structure fire shall be in order of priority as follows:
  - 1. Rescue
    - a. Human life is the most important consideration at a fire or other emergency.
    - b. Rescue of humans overrides all other strategic considerations at a fire.
    - c. The primary and secondary search shall be conducted at all structure fires.
  - 2. Exposure Protection

- a. Exposure protection is the strategy of preventing a fire from spreading to uninvolved building(s) or to uninvolved parts of the fire building.
  - b. The first in Incident Commander shall be responsible for the initial protection of exposures.
3. Confinement
- a. The strategy of confinement means preventing the fire from extending to uninvolved sections of the building.
  - b. Whenever possible, the most effective method of confining fire spread is a direct attack on the fire.
  - c. The Incident Commander shall decide whether to make an offensive approach, aggressive interior attack, or a defensive approach, attacking the fire from the outside. There may be situations when both approaches could be used.
  - d. All avenues of fire spread such as shafts, openings, utility raceways, ducts etc, must be considered.
  - e. Where fires involve concealed spaces (attic, ceiling, construction voids, etc.) it becomes very important that companies open up and operate fire streams into such areas.
4. Extinguishment
- a. In most fire situations a quick and aggressive attack on the seat of the fire will take care of rescue, exposures, and confinement at the same time.
  - b. The size-up will provide information as to techniques, equipment and manpower needed to overcome the fire.
5. Overhaul
- a. The purpose of overhaul is to make sure the fire is completely out.
  - b. Overhaul operations must be properly coordinated with fire investigation efforts.
  - c. Unsafe conditions should be identified early in the overhaul process and definite efforts made to avoid the possible problems associated with the same.
  - d. During overhaul most firefighters are more relaxed, tired, perhaps less alert and thus more apt to get injured.
  - e. Personnel should not remove their breathing apparatus until the area is completely cleared of toxic gases, with the OK of the Company Officer or Incident Command.
  - f. When available, a fresh crew should perform overhaul.
  - g. Particular attention should be given to hidden areas during overhaul.
  - h. During overhaul care should be given to protect personnel from exposure to carbon monoxide and other by-products of combustion. The Carbon Monoxide Detector should be

placed in the work area to monitor the CO level until it drops below 50 parts per million.

6. Ventilation
  - a. Based upon the situation, ventilation may need to occur anytime during the operation.
  - b. The first in company shall assume the initial responsibility for ventilation.
  - c. Ventilation shall be employed to:
    1. Channel heat, smoke and flames from potential victims.
    2. To prevent backdraft and flashover.
    3. To remove heat and smoke from the building so as to reduce property damage.
    4. To allow the interior of the structure to be more tenable and safer for firefighting operations.
7. Salvage
  - a. Salvage may need to begin at various points during a fire operation.
  - b. Salvage is those operations required to safe guard personal property, furnishings, and the unaffected portions of a structure from the effects of heat, smoke, fire and the weather.
  - c. Salvage shall include:
    1. The use of salvage covers.
    2. Removing water from the structure.
    3. Removing furniture and personal belongings to a safe location.
    4. Debris removal.
    5. Removal of valuables from debris.
    6. Covering openings to keep weather out and to secure the building.
  - d. All members are expected to perform in a manner that continually reduces loss during fire operations.
8. Utility Control
  - a. Utilities should be shut down and brought under control to insure that they will not contribute to the fires spread, overall damage or create any type of safety hazard.
  - b. At structure fires where electrical involvement or damage has occurred, request via radio the response of the proper electric company.
  - c. If the electric company is not available in time, fire personnel may shutdown the power.
  - d. If necessary, shut down gas lines at the meter and have the gas company notified.
  - e. If necessary, shut down water supplies to the structure at the valve closest to the point of usage.

9. Safety
  - a. Safety is an important aspect of all fire ground operations. Accomplishing fire ground objectives in a safe manner helps reduce firefighter injuries and deaths.
  - b. Personnel involved at structure fires shall wear appropriate protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus.
  - c. Fire ground operations should not be carried out in a rush, but rather they should be accomplished at a reasonable pace, which allows for operations to be completed in a safe and efficient manner.
  - d. Company Officers must constantly be aware of both fire and structural conditions, which may deteriorate at any point, which places firefighters in jeopardy.
  - e. Indications of the possibility of structural collapse and/or other life threatening occurrences shall be communicated to all personnel within the incident perimeter and appropriate actions taken.
10. Life Safety to the Occupants
  - a. Is the number one priority.
  - b. Fire ground operations shall be coordinated and conducted in such a manner as to support life safety operations, which may be currently under way.
  - c. Hose line placement and ventilation shall be coordinated so as to affect safe and efficient rescue operations.
  - d. Use normal means of egress first.
  - e. Aerial ladders, ground ladders, and fire escapes are considered to be secondary means of egress.
  - f. Provide for the care and medical needs of victims who have been removed from the fire building.
11. On-Site Fire Equipment and Systems
  - a. Utilize on-site fire protection equipment and systems to the best advantage in accordance with the type of system and the incident situation.