



Wintergreen Fire and Rescue Standard Administrative Policy	
Subject:	On-Scene Fire Operations
Reference Number:	FIRE 02-021
Effective Date:	6-Mar-19
Last Revision Date:	
Signature of Approval	Curtis Sheets, Chief

Purpose:

The purpose of this guideline is to provide a consistent approach to structural firefighting strategies and tactics.

Background:

While most agree that the latest research can improve firefighter safety, they struggle to translate the research into fire ground tactics and implement that change in a successful manner. This program rethinks the tactics of old and incorporates the latest research into tactics using the S.L.I.C.E.R.S method. S.L.I.C.E.R.S is an acronym developed to “operationalize” fire dynamic research concepts. The concept has been vetted with the lead researchers involved and has their endorsements.

Definitions:

Accountability Officer – Assigned Officer responsible for the tracking and verification of personnel on the fire ground (PAR).

Defensive Mode – Command option when the Rescue Mode is not imminent and there are NO life-safety issues. This is also when resources are not available. This mode is declared when risks outweigh the benefits. This mode identifies an exterior attack for an extended duration - “Risk a little to Save a little”

Door Control – The process of ensuring the entrance door providing access to the fire area is controlled and closed as much as possible after teams enter the structure. Steps must be taken to prevent the door from locking behind the entering members. By controlling the door, we are controlling the flow path of fire conditions from the high pressure of the fire area towards the low-pressure area on the other side of the door. Door control also limits fire development by controlling the flow path of fresh air at the lower level of the open door towards the seat of the fire.

Fire Attack Mode - When a determination of the first arriving officer deems rescue is NOT imminent. This mode may start out with a quick exterior attack and transition to an interior attack. Command will announce as a “Working Fire”

Flashover - A transition in the development of a compartment fire when surfaces exposed to thermal radiation from fire gases in excess of 1100°F reach ignition temperature more

or less simultaneously. This causes the fire to spread rapidly throughout the space, resulting in fire involvement of the entire compartment or enclosed space.

Flow Path - The movement of heat and smoke from the higher pressure within the fire area towards the lower pressure areas accessible via doors, window openings and roof structures. As the heated fire gases are moving towards the low-pressure areas, the energy of the fire is pulling in additional oxygen from the low-pressure areas. Based on varying building design and the available ventilation openings (doors, windows, etc.), there may be several flow paths within a structure. Any operations conducted in the flow path will place members at significant risk due to the increased flow of fire, heat and smoke toward their position.

Flow Path Control - The tactic of controlling or closing ventilation points which will: Limit additional oxygen into the space thereby limiting fire development, heat release rate and smoke production. Control the movement of the heat and smoke conditions out of the fire area to the exterior and to other areas within the building.

Incident Commander – Referred to as “Command” of the incident. This is the first or highest-ranking Officer or Acting Officer on the incident, who is responsible for the oversight or direction of the incident strategy.

Initial Rapid Intervention Team (IRIT) – Team of personnel who temporally assembles to provide for the safety and rescue of the firefighting crews. Once additional manpower assemble to meet the required “Two-In, Two-Out” Rule, they assume their primary function on the fire ground.

Investigative Mode - Command option where the first-in unit investigates and other apparatus stage. This is when there is NO visible or apparent emergency upon arrival. Example: Responding for a fire alarm with nothing showing upon arrival.

Mayday – A standard three-word distress call to indicate that a firefighter, emergency medical technician, or team is in immediate danger and requires assistance.

Personal Accountability Report (PAR) – A system utilized by the Incident Commander (IC) via the radio and accountability system, to verify the status of personnel at an incident.

Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) – Team of personnel solely dedicated to the safety and rescue of the firefighting crews.

Rescue Mode - Command option where critical life safety situations are present. Command will announce as a “Working Incident”, operating in Rescue Mode. This mode will be declared when there is entrapment of occupants or firefighters. This should be considered on non-fire related emergencies (Structural collapse, confined space, trench collapse). The Rescue Mode ends when the occupants or firefighters have been removed or the determination for rescue is NOT possible.

Safety Officer – Assigned Officer responsible for the overall safety of the incident operation. Incident Commander will assume this role until sufficient manpower on scene.

S.L.I.C.E.R.S. – Fire Attack Mode tactic used to reduce temperatures inside a building prior to entry by firefighting personnel for extinguishment or rescue.

Truck Operations – Support Operations that are assigned to Truck Companies that aid in firefighting and rescue operations.

Vent-Enter-Isolate-Search (V.E.I.S.) – is the approved tactic when entering a structure through an opening (door or window) to search an area for the location of the fire or to locate possible victims. The priority upon entering the area via a window is to close the door to that room or area in order to isolate that area being searched from the fire area. When entering a fire area via a doorway entrance, the door needs to be controlled until the fire area is further isolated or a charged hose line is advancing on the fire. By isolating the area, we are controlling the flow path of the fire, heat and smoke towards the ventilation point as well as controlling the air flow from the ventilation point towards the fire area.

Guideline:

It is critical that the company officer communicate a concise size-up of every incident upon arrival. This information sets the tone for the incident and prompts the dispatcher to ensure the appropriate resources are allocated based on the incident type.

The initial radio report should include the follow:

- Unit Number
- Conditions (Verify situation or declare a “working incident”)
- Building construction type
- Establish Command
- Declare operational mode (Defensive, Fire Attack, Rescue, or Investigative Mode)

The following priorities will guide decision making during the incident:

- Life Safety
- Incident Stabilization
- Property Conservation

When operating at structure fires, the following tactical goals apply:

Size-Up
Location of the Fire
Isolate the Flow Path
Cool from a Safe Distance
Extinguish

Rescue and Salvage are added in as necessary.

Sequential Actions, to take place in order:

Size Up

Size-up must occur at every fire, and as a result of the size-up, the resources available and situational conditions; weather, fire location, size, structure, construction etc. A tactical plan for that fire must be developed, communicated and implemented. First arriving officers/Incident Commanders or their designee are responsible for obtaining a 360-degree view of the structure involved. Where impractical because of building size or obstructions, the Incident Commander should delegate other arriving units to view parts of the structure unseen by the Incident Commander.

Radio Benchmarks

- ➔ Initial Radio Report
- ➔ Declare Operational Mode (Rescue Mode, Fire Attack Mode, Defensive Mode or Investigative Mode)

Locate the Fire

The location and extent of the fire in the building must be determined. Officers should use all means available to make this determination. Thermal Imagers should be activated prior to arrival and ready for the initial 360-degree lap of the structure. The location of the fire and current conditions will dictate the best location to attack the fire.

Identify the Flow Path

The incident commander should identify the presence and/or location of the flow path. Effort should be taken to control ventilation and the flow path to protect potential building occupants and limit fire growth. If a flow path is visible, consider closing doors and windows to limit air flow. When closing doors and windows, firefighters should be aware of any potential rescues readily accessible via doors/windows.

Cool the Space from the Safest Location

Given information obtained during the size-up, locating the fire and identifying the flow path, the incident commander will determine if high heat conditions exist inside the structure. When high-heat conditions are present, the incident commander will determine the safest and most direct way to apply water to the superheated space, or directly on the fire when available. The primary goal in this step is to reduce the thermal threat to firefighters and potential occupants as soon as reasonably possible.

Radio Benchmarks

- ➔ Fire has been “Knocked down” (State location)
- ➔ Communicate method of continued operations

Extinguish the Fire

Once the thermal threats have been controlled, the fire should be extinguished in the most direct manner possible. The incident commander should recognize the potential for the

thermal threat to return and should move to extinguish the fire quickly. The incident commander should ensure the proper initial rescue teams (IRIT) are in place for interior fire attack operations.

Radio Benchmarks

➔ “Water on the Fire,” when water is applied to seat of fire

Actions of Opportunity (May occur at any time):

Rescue

The incident commander should consider the potential for rescues at all times. Firefighters should be prepared to remove occupants. It should be reinforced that often the best action the fire department can take is to suppress the fire. The incident commander and fire ground officers must make a rapid and informed choice on the priority and sequence of suppression activities versus occupant removal. As life safety is the highest tactical priority, rescue shall always take precedence. The incident commander must determine the best course of action to ensure the best outcome for occupants based on the conditions at that time.

Salvage

Firefighters should use compartmentalization to control fire spread and smoke whenever possible.

Special Note on Ventilation: Fire departments should manage, and control the openings to the structure to limit fire growth and spread and to control the flow path of inlet air and fire gases during tactical operations. All ventilation must be coordinated with suppression activities. Uncontrolled ventilation allows additional oxygen into the structure which may result in a rapid increase in the size and hazard of the fire due to increased heat release rates.