Emergency Operations

Book:	3 - Emergency Operations
Chapter:	IV - Firefighting
Subject:	Structure Firefighting
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1.01 Purpose

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.

1.02 Policy

These guidelines shall be followed whenever a fire occurs within a structure.

1.03 Procedures

A. Upon Arrival
    1. The first officer on location shall give a brief condition report. The report should include some or all of the following information.
        a. Number of stories
        b. Type of structure
        c. What is showing?
        d. The intended action of the crew
        e. Whether on not IRIT is in place
    2. Conduct an on the spot size-up.
        a. What have I got?
        b. What is burning?
        c. Where is it going?
        d. Do I need additional help?
    3. The first arriving officer shall take command

B. Communications and Coordination

Good communications and proper coordination are essential at structure fires.

1. The Incident Commander (IC) must provide the necessary coordination of the various fire ground 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 or priority as follows:

3. Rescue
4. Exposure protection
5. Confinement
6. Ventilation
7. Property Conservation
8. Extinguishment
9. Overhaul

1. Rescue

a. Human life is the most important consideration at a structure fire or other emergency.
b. Rescue of people overrides all other strategic considerations at a fire.
c. The primary function or the rescue truck crew shall be rescue.
d. A primary and secondary search shall be conducted at all structure fires.

1) Different teams will conduct the primary and secondary search where possible.

2. Exposure Protection

a. Exposure protection is the strategy of preventing a fire from spreading to an uninvolved building(s).
b. The first in engine company crew shall be responsible for exposure protection.

3. Confinement

a. The strategy of confinement means preventing the fire from extending to uninvolved sections of the fire 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 attack, by means of an aggressive interior approach or a defensive attack, by attacking the fire from outside. There may be situations when both approaches could be used.
d. All avenues of fire spread must be considered.
Examples: shafts, openings, ducts, crawlspaces, utility raceways etc.
e. Where fire involves concealed spaces (attics, ceilings, construction voids, etc) it becomes very important to open up these areas and check for extension.

4. Ventilation

a. Based upon the situation, ventilation may need to occur anytime during the operation.
b. The rescue truck will assume initial responsibility for ventilation upon orders from Command.
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 to reduce property damage.
    4. To allow the interior of the structure to be more tenable and safer for firefighting operations.

5. Property Conservation

a. Property conservation may need to begin at various points during a fire operation.
b. Property conservation is the operation required to safe guard personal property, furnishings, and the unaffected portions of a structure from the effects of heat, smoke, fire and weather.
c. Property conservation 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 salvageable property from debris
    6. Covering openings to keep weather out and to secure the building.

d. All employees and member are expected to perform in a manner that continually reduces loss during fire ground operations.

6. 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 time.
b. The size-up will provide information as to techniques, equipment and manpower needs to overcome the fire.

7. 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 prone to getting injured.
e. Personnel should not remove their self contained breathing apparatus until the area is completely cleared of toxic gases.
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 products of combustion. The air monitor should be placed in the work area to monitor the CO level until it drops below 50 parts per million (PPM).

8. Utility Control

a. Utilities should be shut down and brought control to insure that they will not contribute to the fires spread, overall damage or create any type safety hazard.
b. When shutting off electrical service, turn off the main power disconnect switch rather than the individual breakers in a panel box. This allows the investigator to observe any breakers that may have been tripped.
c. At any structure fires where electrical involvement or damage has occurred, request via radio the response of Reliant Energy Co. to disconnect the meter and block service.
d. If necessary, shut down gas lines at the meter and have Center Point Energy disconnect the meter.
e. If necessary, shut down water supply to the structure at the meter.

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. Employees and members involved at structure fires shall wear all 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. Fire Officers must constantly be aware of both fire and structural conditions which may deteriorate to a 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 personal 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 underway.
    c. Hoseline placement and ventilation shall be coordinated so as to affect safe and efficient rescue operations.
    d. Use normal means of egress first e.g. halls, stairs
    e. Ground ladders, aerial ladders, fire escapes are consider to be secondary means of egress.
    f. Provide for the care and medical needs of victims who have been removed from the fire building.