

TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT CHAPTER 2: STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES	
Part 1: Response Guidelines Subject: Incident Safety Page 1 of 6 Effective Date: 05-01-96	Section: 2-1-20 Reviewed/Revised Date: 02-22-10

20.01 Goal. To maintain the highest degree of safety for all personnel.

20.02 Guideline.

A) Incident Perimeter. The area inside an imaginary boundary that contains the foreseeable hazards of the incident.

1. The boundary is flexible, and is altered by various factors.
 - a) Areas of falling debris (a basic perimeter of 200 feet in all directions should be maintained around high-rise buildings).
 - b) Areas of potential explosion.
 - c) Areas of smoke drift.
 - d) Areas subject to structural collapse.
 - e) Location of fire in relation to the center of the street and clear areas available around the building.
2. All personnel entering the fireground perimeter shall:
 - a) Wear personal protective equipment and SCBA (if required).
 - b) Have crew intact.
 - c) Be assigned to a sector.
3. Yellow fire line tape is used to keep civilians out of an area where a hazard exists. This tape can also be used as a warning device for members authorized to operate within the perimeter.
4. Special hazards, such as hazardous materials incidents will require specific perimeter restrictions. All members working at these incidents must be informed of the hazard areas.

B) Tactical positioning.

1. Positioning will affect the safety/survival of personnel. Members must use caution when placed in the following positions.

- a) Above the fire (floors/roof).
- b) Where fire can move in behind them.
- c) Where sector officers cannot control position/retreat.
- d) When involved with opposing fire streams.
- e) Combining interior and exterior attack.
- f) With limited access -- one way in or out.
- g) Operating under involved roof structures.
- h) In areas containing hazardous materials.
- i) Below grade fires (basement, etc.).
- j) Above or below grade rescues.

2. Personnel safety is the primary reason for an effective and well-timed offensive/defensive decision.

Is the risk to personnel worth the property we will save?

3. When operating in a defensive mode, members should position as far from the involved area as possible while remaining effective. The intent is to use safe positions where possible to safeguard against sudden hazards; backdraft, structural collapse, etc.
4. When operating in an offensive mode, be aggressively offensive. A coordinated interior attack, directed at knocking down the fire eliminates most safety problems.
5. Command must limit the number of personnel within the perimeter to those assigned to a necessary function. All personnel will be:
- a) Positioned in staging.
 - b) Assigned to a task or working within a sector.
 - c) Assigned to a Resource or Rehabilitation area.

Individuals or crews must be restricted from wandering about the emergency scene. If personnel are not assigned to an area, or do not have a staff function to perform, they shall remain outside the fire ground perimeter.

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C) Laddering.

1. When laddering a roof, extend the top of the ladder 5 rungs above the roof line. This will provide a visible means of egress.
2. When laddering buildings under fire conditions, place ladders near building corners or fire walls. These positions are generally more stable if the structure fails.
3. When working above or below grade, try to provide at least two separate escape routes. Stairways, ladders, exits, etc., at opposite ends or diagonal corners of the building is preferred.

D) Sectors. Personnel safety is a primary reason for organizing the scene. Dividing the scene into work areas, with designated supervision, will provide a way to control both the position and function of crews.

1. Sector officers must account for the position and welfare of crew members.
2. Crews must not leave assigned positions unless directed by the sector officer.

E) Rehabilitation.

1. Sector officers must frequently check the physical condition of their crew. When firefighters show signs of serious physical or mental fatigue, they should be reassigned to Rehabilitation.
2. Firefighters may request reassignment to Rehabilitation from their sector officers.

F) Safety Officer.

1. Command shall activate a Safety Officer at all incidents involving. Command should activate this position at any situation where it will be advantageous to the overall safety of operations.
2. Activation of a Safety Officer in no way reduces the responsibility of all sector officers for the safety of their crews. Each member must use common sense and work within the intent of safety procedures.

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G) Structural Collapse.

1. Structural collapse is always a possibility when a building is subject to intense fire.
2. Signs of potential collapse.
 - a) Cracks in exterior walls.
 - b) Bulges in exterior walls.
 - c) Sounds of structural movement - creaking, groaning, etc.
 - d) Smoke or water leaking through walls.
 - e) Flexible movement of a floor or roof where firefighters walk.
 - f) Interior or exterior bearing walls or columns leaning, twisting or flexing.
 - g) Sagging or distorted rooflines.
3. These construction features or conditions have been known to fail prematurely, or contribute to early structural failure.
 - a) Parapet walls.
 - b) Large open (unsupported) areas -- supermarkets, warehouses, etc.
 - c) Large signs or marquees which may pull away from weakened walls.
 - d) Ornamental or secondary front or sidewalls which may pull away and collapse.
 - e) Light weight truss, bar joist, or bow string truss roofs.
 - f) Unprotected metal beams and columns.
4. It is Command's responsibility to monitor collapse potential.

H) Evacuation.

1. When the extent of fire prohibits control, or when the structure becomes unsafe, interior operations should be abandoned.
2. When conditions in the building become untenable:
 - a) Evacuate.
 - b) Regroup.
 - c) Get head count of personnel.
 - d) Redeploy.

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3. The method of evacuation selected will depend on the following circumstances.
 - a) Severity of hazard.
 - b) Type and extent of hazard.
 - c) Area affected by the hazard.
 4. When an imminent hazard prompts an evacuation, notify all personnel using an EMERGENCY TRAFFIC announcement.
 - a) Firefighters will assemble and promptly exit to a safe location.
 - b) Sector officers will again account for crew members.
 - c) Sound evacuation signal.
 5. Evacuation is complete when all crews members are accounted for.
 6. When the evacuation is complete, a more specific evaluation of the hazard can be made.
 7. Evacuation generally involves a shift from offensive to defensive operations. MAKE SURE EVERYONE GETS THE WORD THAT THE STRATEGY HAS CHANGED.
 8. Crews retreating from interior positions often need hose line protection. These situations represent a major function of back-up lines.
- I) Search and Rescue.
1. Before entering the search area, all search members should be familiar with a specific search plan including the overall objective, the search area, individual assignments, etc. This may require a brief conference by the crew before entering the search area.
 2. Searches shall be conducted by two or more members.
 3. Operations and sector officers must be aware of the location and function of crew members during search operations.

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4. Whenever a search exposes the crew to fire conditions (especially above the fire floor), the search team should be protected with charged hose lines as soon as possible.
5. If search crews operate without a hose line, life lines should be used when working in conditions of severely limited visibility.