TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

C-119 TFRD Fireground Tactics

Emergency Manual

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PURPOSE

This procedure establishes tactical guidelines for the response of department personnel and equipment to structure fires. Over the last several years the TFRD has made fundamental changes to our response to these incidents. They are a result of consultation with other departments, fire dynamics and behavior information from Underwriters Laboratories/National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and lessons learned from our own experiences.

These updated tactics reflect our need to keep up with the changing and increasingly hostile modern fire environment and our intent to keep the health and well-being of our firefighters in the forefront of all structural firefighting efforts.

The TFRD **expects** the first officer onscene (First Due Officer, FDO) to use good judgement and experience to do what must be done to effect rescue and/or fire mitigation. The TFRD **understands** that many incidents, while potentially similar, can differ in detail and complexity. The expectation is to apply these guidelines as best as possible to what is encountered.

These guidelines are meant to allow the FDO to focus on the situation and set up the initial response. Successful adaptation of these guidelines to the incident will require analyzing the event and a clarity of situational cues, such as time of day, potential victims, building construction, fire flow, fire intensity and reading smoke. These cues will then inform the order of assignments.

Further goals of these guidelines are to streamline command so that the FDO can orchestrate a collaborative improvisational effort, fashion appropriate solutions and know that oncoming officers and their crews will be on the same page. This will secure a level of consistency and an element of predictability on a chaotic scene, which allows the FDO to focus on the Big Picture and dictate tasks accordingly. At no point are these tactical guidelines intended to hinder emergency scene decision-making by removing judgement, stifle creativity, or create a “checking boxes mentality.”

TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The NFPA Standards on Risk Management state:

1. Activities that present a significant risk to safety of members should be limited to situations where there is a potential to save endangered lives.

2. Activities that are routinely employed to protect property should be recognized as inherent risks to the safety of members, and actions shall be taken to reduce or avoid these risks.

3. No risk to the safety of members should be acceptable when there is no possibility to save life or property.

Based on the above standard, our responses can be broken down into two categories. Response to a life safety situation and response to a vacant structure or non-life safety situation. Clearly there are times when the situation is not easily defined. That is a determination that must be made and factored into the tactical response.

In a life safety situation, the FDO must use their reasoning and knowledge to do what is necessary to effect rescue. Risk is inevitable but firefighters are expected to do what must be done to save lives. It is anticipated that many of the tactics described below are followed and great consideration must be given to firefighter safety. That FDO may choose to employ Vent Enter Isolate Search (VEIS), a Transitional Attack, a Traditional Attack, a Fast Attack or make a Defensive stand depending on the situation.

In a response to a non-life safety situation, the FDO is expected to put resources in place and employ tactics that allow for the safest most efficient method of mitigating the incident.

While commanding the initial response, the FDO’s have the freedom to act on their best personal initiative.

ORDER OF OPERATIONS

Upon arrival, the FDO is expected to conduct a 360 survey of the structure. This is accomplished by the first arriving engine pulling past the structure to allow a visual of three sides and giving an initial size up via radio. More about the 360 survey can found at The **360 Survey C-120**.

A lot is being asked of the FDO to perform a 360 and make the initial assignments. Incoming officers must respect the job the FDO is doing and give them the time to do it. All incoming crews should announce themselves on scene and stage until directed, ideally on a hydrant. The extra minute or two spent getting our resources in place generally makes the tactical response more efficient and coordinated. All should be cognizant of letting the Ladder Truck get up close, if needed.

Once the 360 survey is complete, the FDO, via radio, should update the size up and make assignments based on the information gathered. A good rule of thumb is that if you can see fire, you can affect fire. If it is possible to decrease the thermal threat before crews enter the structure, then a Transitional Attack is a good choice. If the officer cannot see fire but knows it is there, then a Traditional Attack may be the best choice. The Attack crew should then be briefed by the FDO on fire location, any pertinent issues and given the thermal imager (TIC) before they commit to their assignment.

TFRD APPROVED ATTACK METHODS

It is important for the officer and their crew to discuss and make assignments each morning. Be prepared for fireground activity before being called to act.

Traditional Attack – Initiated by assigning crews specific tasks such as Attack, Backup or Search. This is an aggressive interior attack stressing crews work to the seat of the fire to extinguish. Coordination between Attack, Backup, Search and Ventilation determine successful outcomes.

Transitional Fire Attack – Initiated by declaring a Transitional Fire Attack and designating the location of the transitional attack line. The concept is to apply water from a safe exterior location, decrease the thermal threat to attack crews and reset the fire prior to entering the structure.

Once the fire is reset, the exterior transitional line can then be moved into the structure to complete extinguishment in the Traditional Attack style. If it is a larger fire, the Transitional Attack line could coordinate with a 2nd Attack line to enter the structure. The initial Transitional Attack line will continue flowing water until the 2nd Attack line is in position, which allows the Transitional Line to then follow them in as Backup.

Fast Attack – When the FDO absolutely feels the need to pass Command to join their crew because their assistance is critical to affect a positive outcome in that moment. This must apply to Life Safety issues only, not for property preservation. Keep in mind, this tactic delays establishing strong Command and Management of the fire to an oncoming officer who may not be there yet.

Defensive Fire – The extent of the fire and condition of the structure dictate that crews will not enter the structure but will isolate the fire and protect exposures.

Vent, Enter, Isolate, Search (VEIS) – Utilized when credible evidence is presented for a viable Rescue. Command may be passed to allow the first onscene crew to initiate this procedure. See **VEIS C-102**.

TAKING THE HYDRANT

The TFRD expects responding units use common sense and good reasoning when considering taking a hydrant. Outlying districts may be on their own for extended periods of time when it would make sense to secure your own water supply. In districts with a higher concentration of stations, that method may not serve our tactics well.

By listening to the running order, an officer can usually determine when the 2nd and 3rd rigs will arrive. If the FDO feels the 2nd engine will not arrive quickly, they can secure their own water supply and pull up to the structure. If the 2nd rig onscene will arrive quickly, it makes sense for the first rig to pull in front of the structure, set up proper hydraulics, and allow the officer to perform a thorough 360 survey. The 2nd engine onscene will then secure a water supply and establish Dual Pumping.

DUAL PUMPING

Two engines utilizing one water source provides a redundant water supply and multiple options for delivering water to increase firefighter safety.

- Immediately provides up to four (4) Attack lines with front line nozzles.

- The Attack and Backup lines should be from separate rigs.
    - Should either rig fail, the second rig will remain unaffected allowing Command to continue Operations or protect crews during an evacuation.

- One attack line will be designated for RIT giving that crew a vital tool to intervene should a thermal issue develop. See **RIT C-82**.

- Having two engines means having two drivers at the pump panels. Should a negative situation develop that puts two sets of eyes on the problem.

The responsibility of implementing Dual Pumping belongs to the drivers. If there is a working fire, set up for Dual Pumping.

PROGRESS REPORT

Along with initial Benchmarks, a Progress Report can be utilized by the IC to quickly request and receive an update with interior crews. Interior and exterior communication is key to effectively coordinating an incident.

The basic concept is that information relayed should contain the crew's location, an assessment of efforts up to that point and any needs to assist. Responding to a Progress Report should be a quick and efficient update and not a long dialogue.

When an IC requests a Progress Report, it serves two purposes. One is to prompt the interior officer for a report so the IC can determine how they can assist the officer in their mission. The other is that these reports are an evaluatory tool. The IC cannot see what the interior crews are viewing and vice versa. If interior crews report fire knocked down and smoke from the structure is white and unpushed, then it could be a sign that the incident is progressing well. But if interior crews report fire knocked down and the IC sees thick, black chugging smoke, this tells the IC that there is additional fire that needs to be extinguished.

A typical Progress Report should be along these lines:

- "Attack. Command. Progress Report. Still have heavy black smoke coming from Bravo Side, Division 2."

- "Command, Attack. Division 2. We are working our way into the Bravo Knee walls currently. "

FIRE GROUND ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability on the fire ground is the single most important factor effecting organization of the incident and the safety of our people should a rescue need to be performed. The following pertains specifically to our tactical response. More can be found in **Incident Accountability System C-56**.

1. Report Onscene.

1. Upon arrival at a scene, the officer should report onscene, their staged location, and a hydrant if they are sitting on one.

2. Command must acknowledge this announcement. If Command does not acknowledge then repeat until Command does acknowledge.

2. Entering a Structure.

1. As a crew enters a structure, the officer shall, via radio, state their assignment, intended location of operation, and number of firefighters entering which side of the building. (“Search entering side Alpha, three firefighters going to Division Two)

2. Command, RIT and on scene firefighters must know which crews are inside the structure, their assignment and where they intend to operate.

3. Exiting a Structure.

1. When a crew leaves a structure, the officer shall conduct a routine Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) via radio. (“Command. Attack has exited the structure. Engine 5 has PAR”)

2. PAR must be given whenever a crew leaves the structure so Command, RIT, and all firefighters on scene know which crews to track inside the structure.

4. Changing Locations within a Structure.

1. Crews shall inform Command via radio when they change location in the structure. Normally this is only required when changing Divisions or changing Quadrants in large commercial structures.

5. Functional Designations.

1. At all structure fires, Command gives an assignment to each crew being utilized.

2. Once the crew is given a functional assignment that is the radio designation to be used until the assignment is completed. (“Engine 5. Command. You are Attack”)

    1. From this point forward, both Command and the officer from Engine 5 will refer to Engine 5 as Attack and not Engine 5. The radio designation of Attack will remain until Engine 5 completes the task and exits the structure or Command changes their assignment.

3. This will eliminate confusion on the fire ground and assist Command with fire ground organization.

This Fire Ground Accountability shall continue until the incident is termed “Under Control” by Command.

See Also:
360 Survey C-120

VEIS C-102
RIT C-82
Incident Accountability System C-56

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