TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

C-72 Oriented Search

Emergency Manual

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Policy/Procedure

Oriented Search may be the most important task the firefighter performs. Due to the critical nature of search and because it is such a demanding task both physically and mentally, firefighters must practice the techniques frequently.

1. The Mission of Search:

The Mission of Search is to coordinate search efforts in the area assigned. Because of the high risk associated with search, it is always done in teams. It is important to remember that the primary objective is to locate and remove all lost or trapped victims.

If conditions in the fire building are untenable, Command shall initiate an Oriented Search as soon as it is safe to do so. Additional alarms may be necessary for support or relief of Search Teams in large buildings or complex situations.

2. Search Strategies:

1. There are four basic search strategies:

    1. Primary Search - A rapid systematic search performed during fire suppression activities, designed to ensure that all viable victims are removed or moved to a safe area.

    2. Secondary Search - A slow methodical search conducted after the fire is “under control” to locate all additional victims.

    3. Vent Enter Isolate Search (VEIS) – A surgically focused search based on a reliable witness and usually executed from the exterior. See VEIS C-102.

4. Final Search - Final Search is a thorough redundancy that should be conducted as a Secondary Search after an incident in a High Rise or large Commercial structure is well in hand. See the High-Rise procedure for more information.

3. Survivability Profile:

1. The survivability profile is a risk/reward assessment used to discern where survivable spaces could be and begin there. They are based on:
    1. Human Physical Factors
    2. Conditions, location and severity of the fire
    3. Building Construction
    4. Common Sense
2. They shall also consider:
    1. Time of day
    2. Information gained from occupants.

4. Primary Search Timeframe Rule of Thumb:

1. Under IDLH (Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health) conditions, a primary search should be conducted as best and safely as possible giving potential victims the benefit of the doubt.
    1. An SCBA bottle worn by a firefighter operating in stressful conditions will deplete a full air cylinder in approximately 15 minutes.
    2. Humans can survive with 15% Oxygen for four (4) to six (6) minutes at temperatures of less than 180 degrees.

5. The Search Officer:

1. Three responsibilities:
    1. The safety of their crew.
    2. To coordinate the search efforts.
    3. Keep Command informed of their location.
2. The Search Officer shall coordinate the search and decide where to start, based on the Survivability Profile.
3. If the Search Team changes floors they shall inform command. This also assists RIT in keeping

track of the Search team.

4. If Search believes that there are still savable victims in the building/area and that their crew(s) cannot cover the area, then Search shall ask for more help and re-coordinate the effort.

5. If the entirety of the structure, including the basement if present, is searched and no victims are found, the officer shall give the benchmark, “All clear on the structure.”

6. Search is the only function that has the ability to traverse the whole structure as part of its mission during the initial stages of the incident. Search also has the obligation to notify Command of any pertinent safety or fire information they come across.

6. The Incident Commander:

1. The Incident Commander shall prioritize when search operations are to begin. He or she is responsible for having a search completed at every occupied structure fire.

    1. If Command receives information concerning the search, he or she will relay that to the Search Team.

    2. If there are multiple victims or an unknown number of victims, Command shall assign Rescue Groups.

    3. Command shall watch for changing conditions during the fire.

7. Where to Search:

1. Normally, Search will begin at the area closest to the fire where viable victims could be located based on the survivability profile, and will work back from that point until the area is no longer immediately dangerous to life or health.

2. For High Rise Fires or multiple floor fires:

    1. Fire personnel shall search the fire floor first.

    2. Fire personnel shall search the next two floors up in order.

    3. Fire personnel shall search the floors below the fire last.

    4. All stairways shall be searched from top to bottom.

8. Search vs. Rescue:

1. Many firefighting texts and publications refer to “Search and Rescue” as one task. In the TFRD, they are considered two separate and distinct disciplines. Search requires focus. Search Teams should not lose focus or have the search interrupted once a victim is located. If search concerns demand that extensive search and rescues are required, then rescue groups shall be established.

- Rescue groups shall be established at:

1. Hotel or Motel fires of significance,
2. High-rise (residential & commercial) fires,
3. Occupied store fires especially malls or strip malls, and,
4. Night Club or Restaurant fires.

2. Exception: If Search is looking for and locates the only probable victim(s) then Search can and should remove the located victims

9. Searcher Locates a Victim:

1. Once a victim has been located, the searchers shall bring the victim to the oriented person's position. The oriented person shall call for the appropriate number of rescuers from the rescue group. The searcher shall go back to the location where the victim was located and continue the search.
2. Rescuers will bring the victim to safety.

10. Searching with a hose line:

1. Search will normally not take a hose line with them in residential fires. When search crews have to pull a hose line, it affects focus and speed. There is an exception to this rule for commercial occupancies. A 2nd crew will pull and stretch a charged 2-½ inch hose line and work in conjunction as part of the Search team. The Search Team will then work off of this line using it as their oriented position. See Large Area Search procedure.

11. The Oriented Search Defined:

1. "Oriented Search" utilizes one "oriented" person (Team Leader) and one or more searchers.
2. "The Oriented Search" is a method of search that allows focus to split into two directions.
    1. The safety of the Search Team
    2. The actual search

12. The Oriented Search:

1. Oriented Search is based on the 'focus' of one member, called the Oriented Person. Their sole focus is on the safety of the crew. He or she maintains constant awareness of three things:
    1. The entire crew's whereabouts
    2. Fire conditions in the area

3. The location and progress of the searchers

2. While the Oriented Person focuses on the safety of their crew, the searchers maintain their focus: Search. The Oriented Person having a TIC can be very helpful with each.

3. Three things are necessary for a successful Oriented Search:

    1. Communications (between the searcher and oriented person)

    2. Determination of the direction the search will be conducted (right or left-handed search)

    3. Determination of the number of walls in the room (normally in residences)

4. Communication between the oriented person and the searcher helps calm and reassure the searcher while he or she is conducting the search. The searcher is required to count the number of walls and keep track of doors and windows of each room he or she enters. This will also help the oriented person to keep track of the searcher's location at all times.

    1. You should always be in a voice, visual or touch range. The worse the conditions, the closer you should stay together. The better the conditions, the more you can spread out. If you have a probationary firefighter with you, you should keep them close.

5. If the searcher finds another room off the room he or she is searching, they will determine if it is a bathroom or closet. If not, have the oriented person move up to the searcher's position. The searcher will search the new room using the following procedure.

6. The Oriented Search works best with one oriented person and one or two searchers. Any more than four members (one oriented person and three searchers) are unmanageable for the oriented person. "Never switch position". Members shall follow the (two-in/two-out) policy when carrying out a search at a structure.

13. If a member of the Search Team is injured:

1. If a searcher gets injured, the oriented person shall call for a "Mayday" or "Emergency Traffic" and then move up to the searcher. Command shall direct the Rapid Intervention Team on location to respond to the emergency.

2. If the oriented person gets injured or becomes unresponsive, a searcher shall call for a "Mayday" or "Emergency Traffic". If the oriented person can talk, he or she can direct the searcher back to the point the search originated. If the oriented person is unable to speak and the searcher is disoriented, he or she can retreat to a safe area or move to a window. The searcher may then direct the Rapid Intervention Team to that location.

14. If the Search Team finds a deceased victim:

1. If the Search Team locates an obviously deceased victim the body should be left in the position it was found. If possible, a firefighter should be left with the body at all times. If there is any doubt concerning the viability of a victim, they should be removed from the structure.

See Also:

Permanent link:
https://www.tfrdpolicies.com/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=c_manual:c72

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