

FIRE RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Initial Assessment

When a fire is first detected, immediate assessment is critical to determine the appropriate response level.

- Identify the location of the fire
- Estimate the size and spread rate
- Determine if occupants are in immediate danger
- Check for available evacuation routes

Documentation Requirements

After the incident, proper documentation ensures accurate records for insurance and investigation.

- Record time of discovery
- Note all actions taken
- Document any injuries
- Photograph damage when safe
- Preserve any potential evidence

Alerting Emergency Services

Contact emergency services immediately after initial assessment is complete.

- Call 911 or local emergency number
- Provide exact address and location within building
- Describe the type and size of fire
- Report any known injuries or trapped persons
- Stay on the line until dispatcher releases you

Evacuation Initiation

Begin evacuation procedures as soon as the alarm is triggered.

All personnel should proceed to designated assembly points using the nearest safe exit. Do not use elevators under any circumstances during a fire emergency.

- Activate building fire alarm if not already triggered
- Assist mobility-impaired individuals
- Close doors behind you to slow fire spread
- Check doors for heat before opening

Fire Suppression Decision

Only attempt to suppress fires if they are small and contained.

- Fire extinguisher use requires training
- Never turn your back on a fire
- Maintain clear escape route at all times
- Abandon suppression if fire grows beyond control

EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES

Fire Extinguisher Types

Different fire classes require specific extinguisher types for effective suppression.

Class A extinguishers work on ordinary combustibles like wood, paper, and cloth. Class B handles flammable liquids. Class C is rated for electrical fires.

- Verify extinguisher locations monthly
- Check pressure gauges quarterly
- Schedule professional inspections annually
- Replace units according to manufacturer guidelines

Water Supply Access

Fire hydrant locations and water pressure must be verified regularly.

- Map all hydrant locations within response area
- Note private hydrants on commercial properties
- Identify alternative water sources
- Document pressure readings at each location
- Update hydrant maps quarterly
- Report damaged or obstructed hydrants
- Coordinate with water department on maintenance

Protective Gear

Personal protective equipment reduces injury risk during fire response operations.

- Turnout coats and pants
- Helmets with face shields
- Breathing apparatus
- Heat-resistant gloves
- Steel-toed boots

Communication Devices

Reliable communication is essential for coordinated response efforts.

- Test radios at shift start
- Verify battery charge levels
- Confirm channel assignments
- Check backup communication methods

All team members must be reachable throughout the incident. Dead zones should be mapped and alternative communication points established.

PERSONNEL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Incident Commander

The incident commander has overall authority and responsibility for managing the fire response.

This person establishes command post location, determines strategic goals, and allocates resources. They communicate with external agencies and make evacuation decisions.

- Establish command upon arrival
- Conduct size-up assessment
- Develop incident action plan
- Brief incoming units

Logistics Coordinator

Logistics ensures all necessary resources and support are available.

- Manage equipment distribution
- Coordinate fuel and supply delivery
- Arrange food and hydration for extended incidents
- Secure additional resources as needed
- Maintain resource inventory
- Track equipment deployment
- Document resource requests
- Coordinate mutual aid

Safety Officer

The safety officer monitors conditions and ensures responder safety throughout operations.

- Monitor weather and environmental conditions
- Track personnel accountability
- Identify hazardous conditions
- Authority to halt unsafe operations

Rehabilitation Sector

Rehab provides rest, hydration, and medical monitoring for responders.

Personnel rotating out of active operations must report to rehabilitation before reassignment. Vital signs should be checked and recorded.

- Set up shaded rest area
- Provide water and electrolytes
- Monitor responder vital signs
- Clear personnel for return to duty

Operations Section

Operations personnel execute the tactical objectives determined by command.

- Deploy attack lines
- Conduct search and rescue
- Perform ventilation as needed
- Establish water supply

The operations chief reports directly to the incident commander and manages all tactical activities.

POST-INCIDENT PROCEDURES

Scene Security

Once the fire is extinguished, the scene must be secured for investigation.

- Establish perimeter around affected area
- Limit access to authorized personnel only
- Preserve potential evidence
- Document chain of custody

Investigation Coordination

Fire investigators determine the origin and cause of the incident.

- Notify investigation unit
- Brief investigators on observations
- Provide witness contact information
- Submit preliminary reports

Investigators may request access to photographs, radio logs, and personnel statements.

Equipment Maintenance

All equipment used during the incident requires inspection and servicing.

- Clean and dry hoses
- Refill air cylinders
- Inspect protective gear for damage
- Service and reload extinguishers
- Fuel and maintain vehicles

Debriefing Sessions

Post-incident debriefing identifies lessons learned and areas for improvement.

Debriefings should occur within 48 hours while details remain fresh. All personnel involved should participate.

- Review timeline of events
 - Discuss what worked well
 - Identify challenges encountered
 - Propose improvements for future incidents
- Schedule debriefing meeting
 - Prepare incident summary
 - Document recommendations
 - Distribute after-action report

Psychological Support

Fire response can be traumatic and personnel may need support services.

- Monitor team members for stress indicators
- Provide information on available resources
- Schedule critical incident stress debriefing if warranted
- Follow up with individuals as needed

TRAINING AND PREPAREDNESS

Basic Fire Training

All personnel must complete fundamental fire response training before field deployment.

Training covers fire behavior, extinguisher use, evacuation procedures, and basic first aid. Refresher courses are required annually.

- Complete classroom instruction
- Pass written examination
- Demonstrate practical skills
- Obtain certification

Equipment Familiarization

Regular hands-on practice ensures proficiency with all equipment.

- Ladder deployment and climbing
- Hose handling and nozzle operation
- Self-contained breathing apparatus
- Rescue tools and techniques
- Radio communication protocols

Live Fire Exercises

Controlled burn exercises provide realistic training experience.

- Practice attack and suppression techniques
- Experience heat and smoke conditions
- Test equipment under operational conditions
- Build team coordination skills
- Schedule quarterly exercises
- Rotate all personnel through drills
- Document individual performance
- Address skill gaps identified

Community Education

Public education reduces fire incidents and improves community safety.

- Conduct school fire safety programs
- Offer home safety inspections
- Distribute educational materials
- Participate in community events

Prevention education is as important as response capability. Informed communities experience fewer fire incidents and better outcomes when fires do occur.

Scenario Drills

Tabletop and practical drills test response procedures without live fire.

These exercises can simulate complex scenarios including multiple alarms, hazardous materials, and mass casualty incidents.

- Develop realistic scenarios
- Include all response roles
- Evaluate communication effectiveness
- Update procedures based on findings