

Chapter II Operations**Subject 3 Emergency Operations****Topic Structural Firefighting Incident Decision Making Procedure When
Changing from Defensive to Offensive Tactics****A. PURPOSE**

To establish procedures that reduces the risk of injury/death to firefighters due to potential collapse of a fire building when changing from Defensive to Offensive Tactical Operations.

B. OBJECTIVE

The integrity of a building can be compromised due to heavy fire conditions, the weight of water from master stream application and the type of building construction involved (such as: lightweight truss etc.)

This procedure outlines the decision making process and safety guidelines for determining if a structure is safe to enter to perform interior attack following a defensive operation.

C. POLICY

This procedure shall apply to all structure fires where a tactical change from defensive exterior attack to offensive interior is desired.

The Incident Commander has the ability to not implement this procedure when a quick attack/knock down occurs by first arriving Fire companies.

Example: A fire line or Stinger is initially used from the outside of the structure to decrease the spread of the fire while attack lines are being laid or access to the building is being gained.

D. PRIORITIES

1. To determine if the building is structurally safe to enter for Fire Companies to perform interior operations.
2. The Incident Commander and the Safety Officer will develop a plan of action prior to companies entering the building.

3. A meeting is required at the Command Post with Fire Companies to identify hazards and review the plan of action.

E. SAFETY

1. Full protective clothing including SCBA shall be worn at the scene of all structure fires until the Incident Commander directs otherwise. However, members involved in exterior activities are not mandated to use respiratory protective equipment as long as they are in a clear atmosphere.
2. An Accountability Officer and a Safety Officer will be identified within the Incident Command Structure.
3. Only 2 Officers, with one being the rank of District Chief or above, will enter the structure to complete the building safety assessment.
4. All units will work under the direction of Command, no “free-lancing”.
5. The RAT Team, Heavy Rescue and an Engine Company with a charged line will be assembled in front of the building with all necessary equipment ready to be deployed.

F. TASKS

1. A Safety Officer/Company must be implemented.
2. The following Companies will be assembled in front of the building prior to **anyone** entering the building:
 - The RAT Company with equipment ready to deploy
 - Heavy Rescue with structural collapse equipment
 - An Engine Company with a charged hose line

3. Two building assessment Officers, (a D.C. and a Company Officer; preferably a Heavy Rescue regular officer; see section G below) shall enter the building to determine:
 - The structural integrity of the building
 - Hazards (holes in floors, stability of stairs, amount of residual water on floors)
 - Identify the type of building construction
 - Risk/Benefit analysis (There is no point in committing to an interior attack when the building will ultimately be torn down!)
4. The Incident Commander will consult with the Building Assessment, Safety, RAT, Accountability Officers and any other designees to decide whether to begin offensive operations or remain in defensive mode. (Strongly consider including a representative from the Building Department.)
5. Prior to Fire Companies entering the structure, a meeting of **All Officers** will be held at the Command Post and the following information communicated:
 - Identify the Companies that will be involved in the operation. (Limit the number of Companies to the minimum required to complete the task.)
 - Clearly outline their respective tasks along with any exclusion areas or special hazards noted by the Assessment Officers.
 - Areas that are deemed “off limits” to interior fire companies shall be delineated by red fire line barrier tape by the Assessment Officers prior to Fire Companies making entry.
6. The Accountability Officer shall continuously track the locations of companies and be kept informed of any changed in assignment.
7. The Incident Commander shall be informed of any change in interior conditions.
8. Any emergent conditions shall be transmitted to command as “Emergency” followed by the conditions and location.

G. BUILDING ASSESSMENT OFFICERS

1. District Chief:
 - SO1 (Safety District Chief) if on scene
 - SOC (Special Operations Chief) if on scene
 - Another District Chief designated by the IC

2. Company Officer:
 - A regularly assigned Heavy Rescue Officer
 - Safety Captain (once implemented)
 - A Senior Company Officer designated by the IC

3. Consider consulting with a Building Specialist or a representative from the Building Department if available.