

FIRE RESCUE INTERACTIVE

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JULY 1997

The Company Officer and Training

Company Officers end up with a piece of the department training program, like it or not! The responsibilities that go along with the position can't help but cross over to training because of the need to maintain a highly motivated, and competent, company. How the Company Officer takes this responsibility becomes extremely evident based on the actions and performance during both emergency and non-emergency times.

Motivation

The Company Officer must constantly motivate the members. Many times this is a minor task because the members are 'gung-ho' and motivated on their own. However, everybody has a bad day and this is where the CO earns his keep. It's hot, humid, sticky and the air conditioning feels pretty good, how can you compete against that? Find a way! If there is training scheduled, or needed, then get it done. Get the group together and explain that the drill will go on and you're open to suggestions. The objective is to get something out of it and not just to put the time in. Have a contest and reward the most creative idea.

Always Encourage and Allow Input

TUNNEL VISION works everywhere. Just because you think it's a great idea doesn't mean that everybody else does. Remember that the company must benefit from the training and that must be the focus. If the focus is idea ownership then nobody gains. The best training session may be the one that is presented 4 or 5 times. For instance, if you have 4 or 5 members in the company and each was required to develop a training session on the same subject, to be delivered over the next 4 or 5 shifts, you'll probably have that subject covered. In fact, the company will probably handle any variable that arises during actual incidents because of the broader understanding of the subject and the various approaches that the members of the company take. Now, as Company Officer you must make this approach as efficient as possible. Find a way to allow the input that exists to be combined into one training session, rather than 4 or 5. It is possible, making it happen is your part of the training process.

*Remember,
sharing...of thoughts,
ideas, experiences,
innovations and just
plain comments will
allow us to reach levels
together that we could
never reach alone!*

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Know and Respect the Company

As the Company Officer it is imperative that you know the company members. What are their strengths, weaknesses. Where do you fit in. A member who does carpentry on the off days may be the go-to member in matters relating to building construction. Recognize and respect this. Utilize company members in all aspects of training. While there will always be times that you must take the lead, there will always be times that you should fall-in. The strength of your company lies with the members!

Understand Your Role

There's no time, or place, for excuses when the bell rings. The successful Company Officer doesn't wait for training to happen, he makes it happen. Performance, or lack of, doesn't create the training schedule, vision does. What is yours?

Company Officer Challenge?

Get your company together and allow each member to select an area of their choice to present a training session on. Set the parameters so that everyone is given an equal opportunity. The objective is to get the members involved and to allow them to discuss something they like talking about. For the first go around keep the sessions short. Act as a resource for each member. Equally important, hold the members accountable for the training session. This exercise is not an option, rather a requirement. Hold them to it.

Create a schedule. Maybe there are some members that want to become involved in training on a more frequent basis. Let them. This could be the start of less work for you and more involvement of the members. Learning can't take place unless it is allowed to. Give it a try.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING NETWORK

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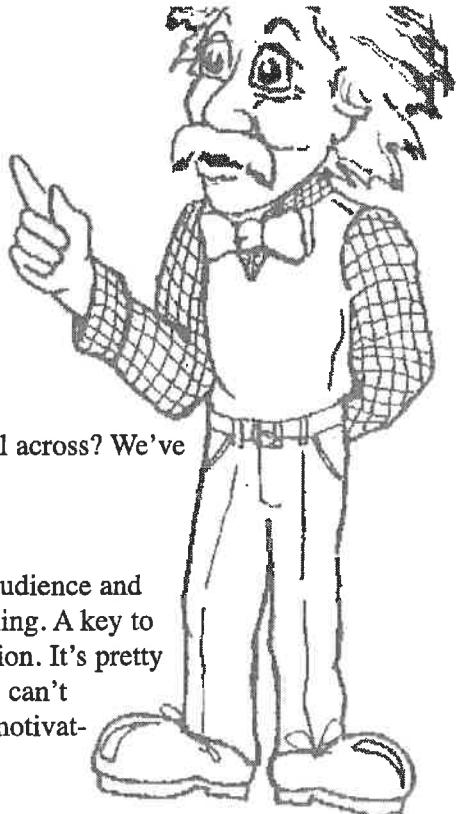
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WHAT IS A TRAINER

A fire department trainer uses a variety of skills to get the job done. It's simply not enough to be able to get up in front of a group and talk about a subject. Successful trainers appear to be doing just that but that's because they have honed skills along the way. Have you ever made the skills a trainer uses to get the material across? We've listed out a few of them here.

- Motivator

The successful trainer motivates the audience and prepares them, continuously, for learning. A key to this ability to motivate is self motivation. It's pretty difficult to motivate others when you can't motivate yourself. If the audience is motivated the atmosphere for learning is set.



- Salesman

Everyone sells something and fire department trainers are no different. The trainer presents material and the students need to buy in. If the students don't buy in then no training takes place. Some sales are easy but many require the constant work of the trainer to get the job done.

- Historian

The trainer has to research the audience and the material to understand why they relate to each other. Part of the motivation and selling of the material comes from an understanding of why it is needed and its history with the audience. A trainer will look into past incidents relating to the material being presented and include them in the delivery.

- Technician

If you can't perform it, or you don't understand it, then how can you teach it? Book teaching is no more than reading aloud. Students can do that on their own. The successful trainer understands the material and is proficient at performing the skills. It becomes painfully evident, really quick, if that's not the case.

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VELCRO SHOES & TRAINING

First, let's explain what is meant by Velcro Shoes. You know what they are, we've all seen them, in fact you may even have a pair. A few years back velcro straps began to be used, as a replacement for laces, on shoes. The craze began on kids shoes but has made it into many adult product lines. Sandals seem to be a popular use for them. With that said you're probably wondering what that has to do with training, right?

Successful training begins with a solid foundation, and understanding, of the subject material being presented. Without this base the success of training is simply hit or miss. Velcro is quick and easy to use, but what does it do? Is that even important? Velcro, laces, clips, straps, neoprene, and countless other devices all do one thing, relative to shoes, keep the shoes securely on the foot! If we protect the foot then we will be able to walk around, pretty simple. If we know that, and we want to walk around, then it really doesn't matter how we secure them, it's all preference.

Fire department training is exactly the same. If we concentrate on learning and understanding the concept then performing the skill is a breeze. It's when we focus entirely on the skill that we fail, miserably. Imagine this, all ventilation training involves the latest, greatest, gasoline-powered, carbide-tipped, chainsaws. These chainsaws always start, are always sharp, never run out of fuel and never

foul a plug. They're great! Now, we pull up and are directed to perform vertical ventilation, immediately! The inside crews are getting beat up, bad. The saw won't start, we have no gas, we threw the chain, it's on the other truck, what do we do now? Have you seen this phenomenon? It doesn't only apply to ventilation.

Concentrate on the material and your people will be armed with the knowledge needed to perform the job. What if the ventilation lecture, with all the pertinent information presented went something like this. "All said and done, when it comes to opening the roof get it done, safely. Use a saw, use an axe, use a skylight, use whatever you have to but get the vent hole cut. Obviously, the easier the better but do what it takes to get it done." Couple this type of training, with the proper foundational knowledge and adequate practical skills and you'll be amazed when the pressure is on. It's all about educating the people, not necessarily programming them!

If you approach training this way, great. If you don't give it a try. Remember, the true success in training comes from understanding the question WHY. If it's asked be able to explain it. If done correctly the question will be answered through performance. It really doesn't matter how the job gets done as long as it's safe and effective. When we realize this, and understand it, then maybe we'll be creating the next generation of Velcro!

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- Leader

This speaks for itself. The trainer must be able to lead the group. Somebody has to! Have you ever been in a group, waiting for something to happen, and waiting, and waiting, until finally the group fumbles along and then breaks up. What was lacking? A leader. A successful trainer will immediately take charge of the group and lead them to the session objective.

- Student

The trainer is always learning. About the material, about teaching, about the students. The constant learning that takes place is continually rolled back into the delivery of the material. How many sessions have you been to that presented the same material, the same way, through the same person? Boring! When a trainer is a student the material is always fresh.

- Mind reader

The trainer must be able to read, and anticipate, the minds of the students. To successfully present the material the trainer must constantly keep the students pointed toward the objectives. The only way this can take place is if the trainer anticipates where they are headed and constantly adjusts the material to keep them on course.

- Comedian

It gets pretty dry sometimes with some of the material that is presented. A little humor goes a

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long way to lightening up the crowd and helping the material get across. A little too much can destroy the entire session. If you enjoy it they'll have a much better chance of enjoying it.

- Brain Surgeon
WHAT? The successful trainer has to carefully and delicately remove many mindsets! For learning to take place an individual must be open-minded. A closed mind has no way in. This is by far the most difficult skill that a trainer must become proficient at. When the trainer believes in the material and uses all of the above skills to deliver it then the mindsets can be changed.
- and more! Successful trainers use many, many skills to remain successful.

These are just a few of the skills needed for successful training. Any successful trainer realizes that they must do whatever it takes to get the material across. Once they accept this training is a blast!

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- comments on *Interactive!*



THE TRAINING VENTRILOQUIST OR LIP SERVICE TRAINER, WHICH ARE YOU?

Fire department training forms the foundation of solid fireground performance. In one way or another the strength of any smooth-flowing fireground operation comes from a solid, and effective, fire department training program. Conversely, poor and disjointed fireground performance can usually be traced back to a deficient, or vacationing, training program. While the training program is either given credit, or blamed, for the performance, the individuals involved are ultimately responsible. These same individuals should also be accountable!

Here's a brief overview of two common types of fire department trainers, the Training Ventriloquist and the Lip Service Trainer. If you train, which one are you? If you don't train, rate your trainers!

The Training Ventriloquist

A ventriloquist is someone who is skilled at drawing attention away from themselves and allowing the audience to concentrate (focus) on the message being presented. The Training Ventriloquist (TV) is a trainer who believes that 'actions speak louder than words.' Everything is presented in an attempt to get the students to understand the material. The students are encouraged to use a lot of common sense, coupled with the basic techniques presented, to get the job done safely and effectively. When

the group is learning, the TV steps back and lets them learn. There is always a constant awareness of the students safety and, as long as safety isn't jeopardized, learning is allowed and encouraged to take place. The best learning, the TV believes, comes from the student finding out on their own what the material, and training, is trying to teach them (letting the light bulb come on). The TV tailors the material to that end and strives to develop the best trained individuals that can perform, on their own, when the TV is gone. The bottom line is that the TV instills the message, and material, in the students and acts only as the delivery agent.

The Lip Service Trainer

Unlike the Training Ventriloquist, the Lip Service Trainer (LST) tends to emphasize everything but the message (training material). LST's point out the importance of the training department and their involvement with it. They make sure everyone knows the long list of credentials required to attain 'trainer' status, which they boast, and they concentrate on educating students on the value of their training (groupies) and not on the valuable training that is needed. Training sessions are developed around the wants, needs and desires of the LST and not of the students. Job performance is secondary to the 'stage' that the LST performs

on. Many times, a quick surface look at the material being presented looks great (all the right points, many buzzwords) but when the show is over the real value is evident, the students lack the proper knowledge to get the skills done. Lip Service Training is similar to a Hollywood movie set, looks great and real from the camera perspective but it's really a set of false front cardboard cutouts giving an incredible illusion!

The Message

The most important point, the one that is trying to be made, is that quality training and quality training experiences are essential to the future well being of each and every fire fighter. If you happen to be involved in training, perform a quick self-assessment to see which category you fit into. If you're in charge of a training program then perform an evaluation of the training staff and see where they're at.

Prepare each and every fire fighter to do the job. When it counts, and the fire fighter gets the job done, it really doesn't matter who taught them as long as they were taught. When this happens they will gladly pass what they know on to the next generation of fire fighters, not for 'idol' status but because they truly believe that training and education make a difference.

FIRE RESCUE INTERACTIVE

VOLUME 2 ♦ ISSUE 2



FEBRUARY 1998

THE NEW COMPANY OFFICER

JUST SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES

Being a company officer requires more than just a proficiency in the hands-on skills required to get the job done. The company officer must quickly develop a host of new skills in order to become successful at this next level.

While many manuals exist to help fire fighters become more proficient at dealing with emergency response, few exist that truly deal with the skills required to supervise, or lead, a group of one's peers. In fact, this peer relationship usually adds to the development time of a new company officer. As a company officer, peers can be your greatest strength, or your greatest weakness, depending on you handle them.

Here's a short list of some of the skills a new company officer will need to become proficient at when entering the field of company leadership. A new company officer will encounter many different responsibilities, some will be easy to adapt to while others will take years to master.

It's trying to master these responsibilities that creates all the fun! Chances are, once a person has reached this level they will have an equally rewarding time learning the ropes and pursuing the next level.

- ◆ Delegation
- ◆ Desk Organizing
- ◆ Sharing Space
- ◆ Time Management
- ◆ Supervision
- ◆ Discipline
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Fireground ICS
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Pre-planning
- ◆ Grievances
- ◆ People Skills
- ◆ And many, many more

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Obviously this is a short list which includes only some of the additional skills needed for any level of supervision, but it's definitely a start.

Delegation

Any time an individual moves up in rank they assume additional responsibilities. Even though the individual's comfort zone may be performing the skills, it's time to pass them off to someone else. Like it or not, the company officer must now ensure multiple tasks get taken care of, and this usually can't happen if the company officer is the one performing the tasks.

Desk/File Organizing

With the job comes the paperwork! As a fire fighter you had to keep track of your own paperwork, your check, your calendar, and maybe some names and numbers. As a company officer working with 4 person companies, for example, paperwork responsibilities increase 4 times. It's time to take a quick lesson on keeping files and organizing information so that when you need it, you can find it.

Sharing Space

You're not the only company officer and it's unlikely that you have a desk or file cabinet just to yourself. Many departments set up an office for the company officers but require everyone to share it. Certain items and information needs to be available to everybody but other items should be kept confidential. Keep this in mind as you begin building your files. You may need to come up with a portable filing system that stays in your locker, or that you store in a locked closet.

Time Management

We would all be well served by becoming better at this. Before this added responsibility there was probably somebody managing most of your time for you. Morning chores, fitness, training, etc. Now it's your turn. Along with scheduling group activities, and performing with the group, you need to keep up with the paperwork that documents all of that stuff.

You're probably getting the idea that all these responsibilities are adding up to a lot of extra work, you're right! Nobody ever said it would be easy, but it's what you make of it.

Supervision

When you're in charge, supervising becomes your responsibility. As a supervisor it's up to you to work things out. Supervision is much more than watching over and resolving issues. It involves overseeing the group and ensuring that the job gets done.

Discipline

Nobody likes this one! Sometimes discipline is that last straw and sometimes it is something that must happen early on, to avoid additional problems. Either way, the company officer inherits the responsibility of passing it out. A couple of words to the wise, make sure it is warranted, make sure it's fair, and make sure it's done for a positive result. Do it for the wrong reasons and you'll find the road will get very bumpy, very quick!

Communication

As a fire fighter, most communication was among peers or with the company officer. As a company officer communication now comes from both sides, above and below. Communication will involve talking, listening, and observing. Some say that the ability to communicate will make or break your success in the position, this may just be the case. One thing's for sure, if you do your job you can't help but get better at it.

Fireground ICS

That's right, as a company officer you still get to work with the rest of the crew but there are other responsibilities now. Before you became a company officer you worked as a member of a company, under someone else. Now you are that someone else and you must direct *your* company. Remember this very important point, ***the job is still the same!*** The same tasks must be accomplished, many times by the same people, it's just that your role is slightly different. Somebody gives you the task and you must make sure it gets done. Other times you may find yourself in charge of the whole incident, for a while or for the duration.

Training

Before it was something you attended. Hopefully you gave a session or two before your appointment. As a company officer you are now responsible for your crew and their ultimate level of performance. That means if they don't know it, or they get rusty, it's up to you to make sure they get the training they need. Training will become a

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they get the training they need. Training will become a constant part of your thought process and make up a large part of company time. If it doesn't you'll not only hear it from your peers but you'll probably hear it from your supervisors.

Pre-planning

As a fire fighter you probably attended many pre-plan sessions, observing all that you could about a future response location. The difference between then and now is that you must set up the pre-plan, notify the building occupants, set the time and make sure your crew gets there. You must also document the visit, log the appropriate information, and file it somewhere so that it becomes useful, and available, when it is needed. You also need to share this information with other company officers who may respond to the same location.

Grievances

Complaints from your crew about working conditions, other personnel, and actions or inactions of the system all fall under your jurisdiction now. If they can't resolve it then you'll hear about it. If you can't resolve it you'll need to discuss it with others. If it's still unresolved you'll need to bring it to the next level.

Equally important here is the grievance aimed at you. Don't forget that with authority comes responsibility. You have the responsibility to be fair, equally. Your actions in this new role will be under the microscope. Actions taken today will have an affect on tomorrow, make sure you look at the big picture when making decisions.

People Skills

Actually, everything you do will deal with people. There are many groups that can be identified. You'll have to deal with peers, subordinates, superiors, the public (both rational and irrational), business owners, government officials, other public safety personnel, children, adults, elderly, etc. Get the picture. It's really no different than dealing with people everyday. One thing that is different as a company officer is that if you moved to the back of the pack as a fire fighter, you don't have that option now.

Dealing with people can bring both the best and worst moments you'll experience as a company officer. The outcome is up to you.

In future issues we'll look deeper into these, and other, skills that may help you navigate through your career as a company officer.

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ARE IN!

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P.O. Box 1852, Indianapolis, IN 46206

February 1998



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A MISSING LINK IN COMPANY OFFICER TRAINING

*Rick Longerich, Director of Training
Indianapolis Fire Department*

Firefighters electing to participate in competitive promotional processes are usually required to meet several components, including department standards which have been in effect for several years (e.g. time in grade, fitness compliance, etc.). A missing component, in most processes, is that promotional candidates are not required to complete any leadership training. This has created a system in which newly promoted officers have been left to develop their own leadership style, with little or no formal training. As a result many new officers are placed in situations where they are forced to, as Caulfield stated in *Winning the Leadership Game*, "play the game without ever having the rules and consequences of playing the leadership game explained to them." This past omission has resulted in company officers in need of additional leadership skills.

Many well known and respected figures in the fire service, as well as the private sector, have addressed the issue of leadership in the work place. One compared the issue to playing a game. Caulfield observed "The first level leadership game is played by captains, lieutenants and firefighters. Although it can be played at a variety of locations, your primary concern will be play in the firehouse. First level leaders and firefighters eat, sleep and work in the firehouse together." This situation is unique to firefighters in that they will spend one third of their lives together, in good times and bad, through family problems and stressful fireground experiences.

From the first moment the new officer enters his station, he/she is under close scrutiny. Caulfield further observed "new leaders are usually immediate game issues, especially if they don't seem to play the game as well as the former leader or if they show signs of changing all the rules that have been established by the company. Sometimes newly promoted lieutenants unwittingly send out danger signals to the group. Perhaps these firefighters were so busy studying for promotion that they did not realize they had to learn to play a new game."

"The company officer cannot afford the luxury of directing his attention and motivation solely toward the physical aspects of the organization. By accepting his position, he has firmly committed himself to the people business. He may have a deep and profound appreciation and understanding of all the technical aspects of his physical resources. However, if he cannot properly manage his human resources, no amount of apparatus or equipment will get the job done."

In addition Caulfield states "even experienced leaders, who played the game well with firefighters in their previous companies, may experience difficulty and send out danger signals to the group upon being transferred, or promoted to new units."

The company officer, who lacks adequate training in the new position they have been thrust into, will be required to make many critical decisions that may have an immediate and long lasting effect on their ability to lead their unit.

James Page, in *Effective Company Command*, observed that "In order to recognize his resources, the Company Officer must categorize them. He will thus find that all of the organizations resources will either be human or physical. The human resources exist in the people that make up the company. The physical resources exist in the buildings, apparatus, equipment and



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money necessary for the human resources in the accomplishment of the common goal."

Interestingly enough, Page further wrote "The fire service has traditionally placed greater emphasis on physical resources than on human. Most fire service publications give broad coverage to improvements in apparatus and equipment, design of fire stations and headquarters buildings and size of training and repair facilities, with scant mention of the important fact that these resources, standing alone, would be of no value without the direction of human beings."

Unfortunately, Page's comments ring all too true. The fire service in general and the unprepared company officers have paid a dear price. Page summed it up by saying, "The company officer cannot afford the luxury of directing his attention and motivation solely toward the physical aspects of the organization. By accepting his position, he has firmly committed himself to the people business. He may have a deep and profound appreciation and understanding of all the technical aspects of his physical resources. However, if he cannot properly manage his human resources, no amount of apparatus or equipment will get the job done."

One of the most important dynamics of the leadership game, is group behavior. It has great bearing on the playing field. Donald Favreau wrote, in *Fire Service Management*, "Each person in the world is an individual with his own needs and ambitions but he is also a member of one or more groups each having its own objective. The fire officer must consider

these two dimensions and their relationship to group behavior. An understanding of group behavior will aid the fire officer in carrying on his managerial responsibilities by preventing personnel conflict, reducing organization stress and solving problems before they become serious."

Within group dynamics another important consideration is the group classification. Groups can be broadly classified as "formal" and "informal," with formal groups having definite lines of authority and defined organizational structure that can be shown on an organizational chart. The fire department is an example of a formal group organized for the purpose of objective achieving. An informal group, by contrast, is loose and has flexibility. The informal group exists inside the formal group. The informal group can and will cause many problems for the company officer who does not recognize how it will function.

How the firefighter views his company officer will vary by his/her own experiences and may provide the officer with substantial roadblocks in their attempt to establish their legitimate authority. According to Henry and Shurtliff, in *Managing People*, "The company officer will be viewed in relation to factors like consistency, confidence, knowledge, fairness, coolness under stress, humor, trust, loyalty, advocacy and approachability. Firefighters will observe how the company officer is treated by other company officers and the chief officers in the department. Firefighters want to have confidence in their company officer and they want to be led." The factors above can be overwhelming to any company officer if they give it much thought on a day-to-day basis, but it is intrinsically intimidat-

ing to the new officer who wants to be successful as a leader.

THOUGHTS FROM A PLAYER...

Reviewing the references while preparing this article has only served to reinforce past experiences while being promoted through the ranks of the Indianapolis Fire Department. It is not an indictment of the department, rather a "state of the union" of the fire service in general. (*Current promotional candidates are the first required by the Indianapolis Fire Department to complete a leadership course.*) As any veteran firefighter will tell you, only the faces and names are different across the fire service spectrum, these leadership issues are found throughout the entire fire service community. Therefore, it seems prudent that as fire chiefs would strive to give their "troops" the very best in technological equipment, that they would also arm them with the necessary leadership skills to effectively carry out their critical assignments.

EFFECTING CHANGE FOR THE POSITIVE

Two recommendations for effecting these changes for the positive include:

- Fire departments develop and institute a component in their promotional processes that ensures their candidates receive more than a moderate amount of training in leadership and managerial skills. It may be necessary to obtain external sources such as community colleges, state training institutions, or federal institutions with the nec-

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essary backgrounds in order to make meaningful change in the way we produce our future fire service leaders.

- Fire departments be advocates for the current fire officers in their organizations to receive in-service training that will give them the information on leadership and managerial skills that has been available in the past to only the most progressive departments.

And, in addition that:

- This training be given a priority one mission if there is truly to be a significant impact on the organization.
- This training be viewed as important as yearly SCBA, hose, ladder, incident command, or bloodbourne pathogen training if we, as a profession, are to meet the higher expectations that society and the firefighters themselves demand of us as leaders of our respective organizations.

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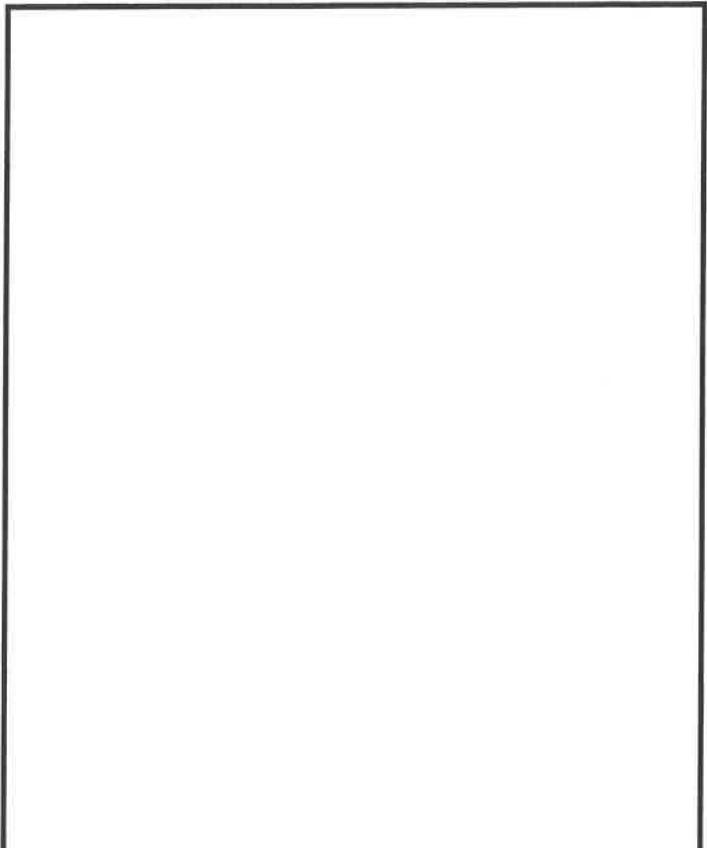
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TRAITS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



WHEN IT COMES TO TRAINING...

Answer this question to find out if they can't or won't actively participate: "If their life depended on it could they do the work?" A "yes" means the problem is motivational, a "no" tells you they lack the ability!

IT'S A TRAINING ISSUE!



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JERRY SPRINGER'S FD TRAINING TIPS

THE SECRET TO SUCCESS!

What's the secret to Jerry Springer's ability to capture an audience and send them away talking about the show? Even more than that, why is it that he has such a faithful following of viewers - willing to skip even the most traditional afternoon snooze to catch his show? Maybe one of the keys to successful fire department training is *entertainment*. Here's a few of the things that seem to be working for Jerry. It seems that he's always got some kind of interesting topic (even outrageous), the pre-show hype appeals to a whole bunch of people, he's found a way to make every topic come to life on the stage, and he's been able to sink a hook deep enough into his viewers to get them to come back day-after-day-after-day. Maybe it's time that we ask him for some help with fire department training – or maybe we can just follow his lead.

ON CONTENT...

Give them what they want! In most cases, what the troops want is what they need most. One of the biggest mistakes that's made, when it comes to training, is that we don't ask firefighters or officers what *they* need.

What usually happens is that the core training curriculum is developed around what somebody else says is needed. Need a few good training sessions dealing with engine company operations? Go to somebody on an engine company and ask them what skills they haven't used in the last few weeks or months and provide training on those skills. Do the same for ladder companies. EMS. Hazardous materials.

Be creative! Even if it's the same old stuff - give it a new twist. Give them what they need to get the job done on the streets - not in theory!

ON PACKAGING...

Create a whole lot of hype, make it a big deal, and spark their interest before they ever get to training!

Think about all those teaser commercials that are seen on television. Each provides a quick glimpse of what is coming up. There isn't enough information to do anything but get you thinking about why you don't want to miss the show- that's the whole point.

Approach fire training the same way. Let's say that you have training every other shift. During the shift prior to the training session begin to give bits and pieces of information about what problems the training will involve. Start to develop their interest by providing some of the issues that will have to be dealt with.

Build up some hype, *but make sure you deliver!* The quickest way to turn hype into a hoax is failure to produce when the time comes. If the training session stinks then there won't be much interest the next time. The students will probably create their own hype and it won't be about how good the training was!

ON PRESENTATION...

Presentation is everything! You don't need to throw chairs at each other (maybe that was Geraldo!). You don't need to have bodyguards or bouncers - well maybe sometimes you do. What's needed is captivating,

SPRINGER'S FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING TIPS

Give them what they want!

Create a whole lot of hype, make it a big deal, and spark their interest before they ever get to training!

Presentation is everything!

Exceed their expectations and keep them wanting more!

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RIT TACTICS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

ACCOUNTABILITY...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

JERRY SPRINGER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

energetic, and informative training sessions. Sessions that keep them on the edge of their seats. Sessions that are truly interactive - getting everyone involved even if they don't want to be!

How? Find their hot buttons and push them! That's right, if you know a student is always willing to accept a challenge then create one during the session. If you know a student always hangs back and watches rather than getting involved then include something that requires involvement.

Stir them up! Get outrageous if you have to. Do whatever it takes to get the material across - who cares if you push a few buttons. When it comes to presentation, if the session doesn't capture them enough to send them away at least thinking about the material then it was probably a waste of time.

ON TOMORROW'S TRAINING...

Keep them wanting more! The secret to getting them to tune-in tomorrow, or at the next training session, is to send them away from the last one wanting more.

By delivering training sessions that catch them completely by surprise then you're sure to have them wondering what the next one will be like.

Exceed their expectations! It doesn't take long to get comfortable with something or fall into a routine. Give them a few good sessions and they'll begin to expect them. Strive to design each session better than the last one.

Here's a tip: Don't fall victim to the quick boost that usually accompanies any change in routine. Success or failure will be determined by long-term results and will be seen in fireground performance!



THE COMPANY OFFICER...

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

William Beetschen

Training Officer — Newport Township, IL, Fire Department

As an officer, it is important to remember that you have four distinct areas of responsibility.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

Fireground operations are the most visible and probably the most desirable of the officer's tasks. Excellent fundamental fire suppression knowledge and experience with strong incident command skills prepare the officer to do the best job of organizing and overwhelming the incident at hand. What happens in the first minutes of the incident sets the stage for how the situation will play out. Command conditioning is a requirement, not an option. No department or officer can ever be expected to be totally prepared for "the big one." But using the incident command system to handle the little ones on a day-to-day basis gives you a great basis for expanding the plan should an overwhelming incident occur: Small incident, small plan; big incident, expand the small plan.

ADMINISTRATIVE

(A.K.A. Staff support functions) This is probably the most poorly defined and most neglected function of the fire officer. It is vital that the chief empower officers to handle many aspects of the department's

day-to-day business. If the officer does not have a good understanding of how the department functions, his effectiveness will be significantly diminished. The chief officer cannot possibly handle everything that needs to be handled. Besides, autocracy breeds paranoia and contempt.

If the chief spends a little time researching his staff and discovering what necessary job each particular officer is skilled at and really enjoys doing and follows up by assigning that administrative function to that officer, everybody wins. The chief who fails to assign a staff function to an officer who would really embrace the task simply because the officer might enjoy it "too much," because

the officer knows more about it than the chief, or simply because the chief wants to punish the officer for not being "in the group" is an idiot who is simply filling the chief's chair instead of striving to do the best job possible across the board. Of course, it also stands to reason that an officer who feels that his responsibility ends at the fireground has a poor sense of responsibility and commitment. Not everything in an officer's job description is always fun and exciting, but it's almost always necessary.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

(A.K.A. Problem Solving) Clearly the least popular on most everyone's list of things to do, this is particularly painful in a small department of friends where everyone knows everyone. Effective management of staff is every bit as crucial in the little volunteer organization as it is in a large career organization. This is a skill that is acquired over time with no small amount of personal pain. Fairness is everything.

SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY

Let's say it again: Our main job is not to kill firefighters. We don't send people into fully involved defensive mode fires to save possible occupants

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Areas of Company Officer Responsibility

- Command and Control
- Administrative / Staff Support Functions
- Personnel Management / Problem Solving
- Safety, Safety, Safety...



ETHICS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

who are clearly beyond hope, but we likewise don't send untrained, poorly equipped firefighters into otherwise *routine* fire conditions, since they are likely to become injured or be killed because of their lack of preparedness. You owe it to your department to someday travel to the funeral of a firefighter killed in the line of duty and experience firsthand the life-changing devastation that it brings to all involved, and you will probably learn, as is the case in most firefighter deaths, that the firefighter involved was engaged in an unsafe practice or

was somewhere he was not supposed to be. For the fire officer, safety must underscore every thought and action. If an unsafe condition exists, the likelihood of someone else addressing the problem is poor. The officer must deal with it immediately.

The Officers Areas of Responsibility...is an excerpt from an article published in Fire Engineering's Volunteer Corner, May 1999. Reprinted with permission.

FIRE RESCUE INTERACTIVE

VOLUME 4 ♦ ISSUE 1



JANUARY 2000

THE 10 WORST THINGS AN OFFICER CAN SAY...AND MEAN!

William Beetschen

Training Officer — Newport Township, IL, Fire Department

LET'S WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

Something almost always will happen, and odds are that you won't like it! Procrastinating for lack of an action plan gives the incident the upper hand. If you don't know what to do, ask someone who might. If you're not sure, always err on the side of safety.

...BECAUSE WE'VE ALWAYS DONE IT THAT WAY.

This is a non-answer, an "I'm not now nor ever will be into effecting change for any reason." The best job for this type of individual is staging officer for antique

apparatus. Instead of saying "Don't fix it if it isn't broke," ask "What's a better way to keep it from breaking?"

YOU CAN'T TELL ME

Well, then there's no sense in my discussing this issue with you because you've already made up your mind that no one's going to tell you anything. This is a pretty effective comeback, although it can be just like giving sugar to a hypoglycemic—just when you thought he'd get better, he comes up swinging. However, if you give someone this response and mean it, you'd be surprised at the dialogue it might open up.

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*Remember,
sharing...of thoughts,
ideas, experiences,
innovations and just
plain comments will
allow us to reach levels
together that we could
never reach alone!*



10 WORST...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

WELL, YOU KNOW, THAT MIGHT WORK FOR MOST GUYS, BUT WE DO THINGS AROUND HERE A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY THAN MOST PLACES!

What is usually meant by the speaker to be a defiant statement of pride actually forms an alliance of ignorance and laziness. Who in his right mind would be proud of deviating from accepted successful practices, except for the rare case in which a great improvement has been made? However, those individuals aren't usually making that statement.

RULES ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN.

Yeah, and tower ladders are made to be operated by penguins! This statement might have some truth to it; otherwise, how could the person saying it be an officer?

LET'S JUST GET THROUGH THIS ONE; NEXT TIME MAYBE WE'LL DO THINGS THE RIGHT WAY.

And the next time turns into the next time, and so on. Of what are we afraid? Change? Education? Work? If you train on a new concept and run scared every time the opportunity to use it presents itself, the fear of change and mistakes will eventually dog every tactical action.

OH, WELL, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.

(This is akin to, "Oh, well, that's not my problem.) Yes, there is. (Yes it is.) Or at least you can make someone who can do something about it aware. This is pure lack of motivation and interest. Send this person to count folding chairs and ask him to let you know if any of them try to make a break for it.

WE'RE VOLUNTEERS! THEY CAN'T MAKE US DO ANYTHING WE DON'T WANT TO

This is gross misinformation at best, yet it is a statement heard with alarming frequency. I am often told by these folks to go outside and look at the sign on their building, which says "volunteer." First of all, they need to look at the sign and notice that it says something like "Fire and Rescue." This is not a softball team, a sewing circle, or the Sons of Knute lodge. This is real. Also, it's most often not their building but the property of the customers they serve. [This statement works equally well with those firefighters who are, from time-to-time, acting

officers. There's no such thing as temporary when it comes to the responsibility assigned to the job!]

WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW WON'T HURT THEM

If whatever it is doesn't hurt whomever we're talking about, you can bet that in this day and age, it will come back to bite you. And, anyway, why are we doing something that fits into this category?

IT'S MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY.

Go ahead, make a good argument for this one. Of course, there will be times when you don't have the time to qualify your order/answer-and shouldn't have to-or when you have exhausted all reasonability when dealing with the person with whom you are interacting. To embrace this statement as a style of management is to reduce all constructive input to an irritative status.

None of the above statements are fabricated. All, when used sincerely and frequently, can serve to remind us that we have some personal tune-up work to do as officers.

The ability to approach problem solving from a "get all the facts" perspective is your best hedge against surprise circumstances and hasty judgments. If you can't be unbiased, find someone who is.

The 10 Worst Things List...is an excerpt from an article published in Fire Engineering's Volunteer Corner, May 1999. It's appropriate for all levels of the fire service, not strictly officers! Reprinted with permission.

THE 10 WORST THINGS...

- Let's wait and see what happens.
- ...because we've always done it that way.
- You can't tell me
- Well, you know, that might work for most guys, but we do things around here a little differently than most places!
- Rules are made to be broken.
- Let's just get through this one; next time maybe we'll do things the right way.
- Oh, well, there's nothing I can do about it.
- We're volunteers! They can't make us do anything we don't want to
- What they don't know won't hurt them
- It's my way or the highway.

FIRE RESCUE INTERACTIVE

VOLUME 5 ♦ ISSUE 3



MARCH 2001

FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

THE ENGINE COMPANY OFFICER

PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS

The engine company officer will have more influence on the outcome of a fire operation than any other member on the scene. The attitude this officer displays will become a model for the unit's firefighters to follow. The manner in which orders are given and assignments made sets the tone for the entire engine company operation at a fire or emergency. Officers who are serious about training and expect a high level of professionalism from the members of their company will see it reflected in their unit's performance at drills, fires, and emergencies.

After the engine company officer has determined that a hoseline is needed, the location, route, and number of lengths required in the stretch should be relayed to the unit's members. Properly trained firefighters should be able to perform the fol-

lowing tactics without the officer's personal supervision:

- Hose estimate and removal from the apparatus.
- Positioning the apparatus at a serviceable hydrant.
- Connection of the apparatus to a hydrant.
- Stretching a hoseline.
- Supplying booster water if ordered.
- Operation of apparatus mounted large caliber stream (LCS) device.
- Supplying standpipe and sprinkler systems.

The first arriving engine company officer should consider the removal and placement in the street of a second hoseline if fire conditions indicate it is warranted.

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*Remember,
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ENGINE COMPANY OFFICER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

DIRECTING THE ENGINE COMPANY

After ordering the first hoseline stretched, the engine officer should enter the fire building and begin gathering information that will assist the unit in stretching rapidly and accurately to the fire area. This information should include:

- Radio transmissions from the ladder company.
- Type of stairway - if present (i.e. return, straight run, around elevator).
- Presence or absence of a wellhole.
- Difficulties caused by large numbers of fleeing occupants.

If no ladder company is present, the engine company officer should attempt to enter the fire area in order to locate the seat of the fire and search for victims. If the ladder company is forcing the door to the fire area, the engine officer should proceed to the area immediately below the fire and:

- Determine the layout of the area (in multiple dwellings, layouts tend to be similar in each vertical line of apartments).
- Look at the ceiling for signs of structural weakness or holes.
- Look out a window to determine the location and extent of the fire on the fire floor.
- When returning to the fire floor, look out a stairway window in order to gain a different view of the fire floor from below.

The gathering of information by the engine company officer takes little time. The advantages gained will result in proper line placement and rapid line advance to the seat of the fire.

While gathering information concerning the hoseline stretch, the engine officer should be alert to building occupants with information relative to persons trapped or distressed. If persons were reported trapped on the initial alarm, or if information or statements indicate this possibility, the engine officer should determine the following:

- Where are the people trapped?
- How many people are trapped?
- Are the trapped persons children or adults?
- Are the occupants normally home at his time of day?

While searching within a fire area, interior doors that can be used to help confine the fire until the arrival of the hoseline should be closed as soon as possible.

If the entrance door to the fire area (for example: this may be the apartment door in a multiple dwelling or a bedroom door in a private dwelling) is found open by the

engine officer and entry is *not possible*, it should be closed immediately to prevent the products of combustion from entering the hallway and contaminating the upper floors and preventing the escape or removal of civilians from above the fire. Door control is **critical** to the safety of any firefighters operating on the floors above the fire.

Upon arrival of the nozzle team at the entrance to the fire area, the officer should assure that each fire fighter is properly equipped with bunker gear, helmet, gloves, mask and hood. After ascertaining that sufficient hose has been stretched and flaked out, the officer should call for water via radio and see that the line is properly bled of trapped air.

Prior to opening the door to the fire area for advancement of the line, the engine officer **must** assure that no firefighters will be exposed in the hallway or on the stairs above as the fire attack is initiated. This can be done via radio or in person. When the door to a fire area or fire apartment is opened, particularly in buildings equipped with thermal pane windows that *have not* self vented, there exists the possibility that fire will flash outward and upward and seriously expose or burn any firefighters operating in unprotected positions above the fire.

Immediately before moving into the fire area with the hoseline, the engine officer should relay to the nozzle team information gathered while the line was being stretched. This information might include phrases such as: "two rooms, left, rear," "straight down the hall, second room on the left" or "holes in the floor, stay to your right hand wall."

The nozzle team **must** begin every interior fire attack through the door to the fire area crouched low, near the floor, *regardless of conditions*. A sudden ceiling collapse, rapid self-venting or a fire driven by wind could create a blowtorch effect at the entrance door and seriously injure any firefighter in its path. After entry is made into the fire area, the engine officer can evaluate conditions and adjust or modify the method of advance used.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication during the fire attack may be almost impossible due to the noise created by the stream striking walls, ceilings and furnishings. However, the engine officer must monitor the radio for critical information that may affect the nozzle team. This includes ventilation delays, water supply difficulties, collapse potential and "mayday" and/or "urgent" transmissions.

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IE COMPANY OFFICER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

The engine company officer can provide the IC with vital information that may affect how the fire operation is handled. Messages such as those listed below should be transmitted to the IC, other units, or individual members on the scene:

- “Start an additional line to the fourth floor.”
- “We have/don’t have a wellhole.”
- “Start water.”
- “We have two rooms knocked down, making progress.”
- “Main body of fire has been extinguished.”
- “Increase/decrease pressure.”
- “We need a back-up line.”

Note the short and concise wording used in these messages.

The engine officer initiating communication with the IC or other member should expect an acknowledgment. Likewise, the engine officer should acknowledge all messages received. This two way exchange of information will provide all members on the scene with a different perspective of the operation. For example: “Engine 1 to Command, main body of fire has been extinguished.” Reply: “Command to Engine 1, be advised that fire is still issuing from one window at the front of the building.”

Communicating with the Crew

During the advance of the hoseline, the engine officer must constantly monitor the nozzle team’s progress and the conditions around them. The protection afforded by bunker gear, masks, and hoods tends to insulate firefighters from the hostile fire environment which could cause members to penetrate unknowingly into severe conditions.

As the hoseline is advanced into the fire area, the engine officer should communicate orders and directions to the nozzle team using as few words as possible. As progress is made, the nozzle team can be encouraged with statements such as “you got it,” “move in” and “good knockdown.” The nozzle team should be advised of their progress and given estimates of how much fire remains to be extinguished.

Engine company officers should develop a communication system with the nozzle firefighter for use when voice communications are impaired due to stream impact noise, power saw operations, opening up and ventilation noise.

The following system of touch signals can be used in conjunction with verbal commands to relay orders:

- Opening or closing the nozzle—One or two slaps on the back or shoulder.

- Direction of stream—Tug or pull on the arm or nozzle, either left or right.
- Advancement of hoseline—Steady push on back or mask cylinder.
- Halt or stop advance—Pull back on shoulder, bunker coat or mask assembly.

THE POSITION OF THE ENGINE OFFICER

The engine company officer’s position when supervising the nozzle team must remain fluid. Due to conditions such as tight quarters, stock or furniture impediments, forays to vent or search, and the nozzle team making turns and bends, the officer may have to drop back on the line, switch sides or even move ahead of the nozzle momentarily to allow for optimum nozzle positioning.

If an emergency situation develops which requires the immediate withdrawal of the nozzle team, the officer or other member aware of the situation should indicate this fact by using four (4) strong slaps on the shoulder of the other members and then pull them in the direction of retreat.

After the main body of fire has been extinguished, the engine officer should order the nozzle shut down. This action allows heat and smoke to rise and vent and any remaining fire to “light up” and indicate those areas requiring follow up extinguishment. At this time the officer can check adjoining rooms or areas for fire extension.

When conditions permit, the engine officer may order a fog or broken stream directed out a window in the fire area to assist in removal of heat and smoke conditions. This action will also make search and overhaul operations easier. The stream is directed out the selected window with the nozzle held 4-5 feet back from the window and the stream filling the opening.

THE OFFICER AND DECISION MAKING

The nozzle team is composed of the nozzle and back-up firefighters under the leadership of the officer. While some decision making authority is delegated to the nozzle firefighter, it must be understood that any actions taken are under the strict supervision of the officer in command of the line. The officer must exercise the power of command under fire attack conditions and expect prompt, implicit and unqualified response.

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WHY TRAINING

Fortunately for today's firefighters the majority of thermal imagers in use are very simple and easy to operate. Likewise most firefighters are quickly feeling comfortable with the basics of thermal imaging and how it is applied. Unfortunately this seeming ability to "grab and go" with a thermal imager has led many fire departments to believe that little time should be spent on thermal imaging training. However, the reality is for firefighters to fully maximize the potential of thermal imaging, and more importantly to do it safely, training should actually be taking place on a regular basis.

Without this training a number of disastrous results are possible. Having had their sight returned firefighters are more apt to do a number of hazardous things including: standing and walking, advancing in a structure without reference points, and advancing in structures past the "point of no return". Firefighters can also develop a dependence of the sight provided by the thermal imager, which can prove disastrous if the unit fails. Many firefighters may also place themselves in harms way because they misinterpreted the information provided by the thermal imager. The bottom line, without training, a thermal imager may actually encourage firefighter to take an action that will actually increase the level of danger rather than decreasing it as it was intended.

PUTTING THE TRAINING TOGETHER

Just like with any other training session, it is important that a training session on thermal imaging is put together and conducted in a professional and accurate manner. Unlike many other Emergency Service training topics this can be very difficult to accomplish. Unlike most other Fire Service training topics, currently there are no standards or official references established by NFPA or any other national organization for thermal imaging. Fortunately some State level programs are starting to develop materials, so they may be a place to start, but getting the information to put the training together can be very challenging. Another issue is finding an appropriate instructor. Few personnel have a formal background in thermal imaging and any practical experience applying it in the field. This being the case it may be necessary to go outside of the department to find an instructor. There are a number of private agencies and state agencies that have highly qualified personnel available. It is critical that an appropriate instructor is used because with bad information firefighters will be taking an action based on a belief that it is the proper thing to do.

Once the instructor is selected an appropriate training program must be decided on. Many departments are taking an approach to thermal imaging training similar to the training established for

ENGINE COMPANY OFFICER...FROM PAGE 13

The following listed tactics are of such importance to fire control efforts that the decision to implement them is reserved for the engine officer alone.

- Calling for water (charging the line).
- Opening the nozzle.
- Initial stream direction (at ceiling, seat of fire etc.).
- Direction of team advance.
- Initiating line advance.
- Stopping line advance.
- Stream shut down.
- When adequate "knock down" has been achieved.
- Use of stream for cooling.
- Use of fog for attack.
- Use of fog or broken stream for venting.
- Amount of water used.
- Assignment of engine firefighter for venting or search.
- Relief of nozzle team.
- Need for relief of the unit.
- Necessity to back the hoseline out.

Decisions that may be delegated by the engine officer to the nozzle team include:

- Direction of stream.
- Rate of advancement.
- Opening nozzle in an emergency.
- Partial shut down of nozzle to reduce nozzle reaction and regain control.
- Calling for more line.
- Sweeping floors with stream.

The high level of physical activity required for firefighting is well documented and the debilitating effects on firefighters must be recognized by company officers. The engine company officer should evaluate the members of their unit during and after the fire attack and promptly relieve individual members or request through the IC relief for the entire unit.

Excerpt source: Firefighting Procedures Manual, FDNY.



The Role of the Company Officer & Leadership PART I

THE TRANSITION TO SUPERVISOR

The transition from subordinate to supervisor involves changes in duties, changes in status, changes in relationships with other firefighters, and changes in attitudes and responsibility.

Failure to make the necessary changes results in four kinds of ineffective supervisors:

- Reluctant supervisors ("just for the added pay")
- Weak supervisors ("has not changed")
- Autocratic supervisors ("has gone to his/her head")
- Uncertain and inconsistent supervisors ("does not know what he/she is doing")

Successful transition to the supervisor's role involves adopting certain attitudes:

- "My primary responsibility is to get the job done".
- "I have to anticipate and resolve problems, not just react or act helpless".
- "I have to help my subordinates improve their skills and advance their careers".

To help the new supervisor make the transition from subordinate to supervisor, fire departments use:

- Training in the supervisory role.
- Transfers, so that the supervisor can begin exercising his/her authority with a new set of firefighters.
- Temporary assignments, so that the supervisor can gather broad experience and gradually take on more new responsibilities.

Subordinates test a new superior to see how much the new superior will bend the formal rules of the organization. This "testing" typically goes through stages of increasing confrontation. But as the testing goes from stage

to stage, fewer subordinates remain in the scenario. Very few subordinates carry through to the last stage, and very few other subordinates give them support at the last stage. The stages are:

1. **The "Feeling-Out" Stage:** Subordinates violate minor rules which are commonly violated on the job to see if the supervisor will object to these customary infractions. They test how far they can go.
2. **The "Request" Stage:** Subordinates ask for permission to do little things which are in violation of the official rules. They seek formal approval for the infractions.
3. **The "Confrontation" Stage:** If the superior has denied permission to do something, some subordinates will not accept that immediately; they will confront the superior and tell him/her that they intend to break the rule no matter what the superior says. Some other subordinates may support the one who leads the confrontation.
4. **The "Open Warfare" Stage:** If the superior does not back down after the confrontation, there is occasionally a subordinate or a few subordinates who will take some action to intimidate the superior, perhaps damaging the superior's belongings or threatening the superior or in rare instances physically attacking the superior. It is rare that other subordinates will support this kind of behavior. Subordinates will support the superior who takes a decisive action at this stage.
5. **The "Conquest Plateau":** The superior who has overcome confrontation and open warfare does not usually have to face the same kind of situation with anyone else. A superior who has been through this kind of situation has a reputation which obviates any later confrontations.

Next Month: Part II—The Role of the Supervisor

SOURCE: FIREFIGHTING PROCEDURES MANUAL, FDNY



The Role of the Company Officer & Leadership PART II

The supervisor has a "role," like a character in a play. The performance of the role requires the supervisor to learn certain skills. The skills which supervisors must learn include:

- A. **Planning:** setting goals, choosing means to achieve the goals, and scheduling the work.
- B. **Organizing:** creating or adapting work teams to do various tasks, e.g., role of first unit at a fire.
- C. **Staffing:** training subordinates and assigning individuals to do various tasks.
- D. **Directing:** giving instructions for doing work.
- E. **Controlling:** seeing that work is being accomplished according to standards.
- F. **Communicating:** listening, keeping informed, getting reports and information to people who need it.
- G. **Coordinating:** working cooperatively with other supervisors of units, with superiors and subordinates.

The most common error is for supervisors to concern themselves almost exclusively with the work that their subordinates are supposed to do rather than focus on the work which must be done by a supervisor. This happens because the person is more familiar with the subordinate's role or perhaps does not like doing the super-

visor's work. Supervisory work is usually less physical and has less tangible, less immediate results.

Although there are some variations in the proper role of the supervisor, depending on size of a department or local customs, there is general similarity in what kinds of tasks are restricted to a supervisor, what kinds can be delegated, and what kinds of tasks should not be done by a supervisor.

Tasks which only the supervisor should do:

- Check and sign reports
- Make out assignments
- Check on work being done
- Handle complaints

Tasks which the supervisor should delegate:

- Getting data for reports
- Some training of subordinates
- Give a tour of the firehouse
- Make a schedule for inspections

Tasks which the supervisor should not do:

- Housewatch
- Equipment maintenance
- Taking the nozzle at a fire
- Driving the apparatus

Note that "delegation" is not the same as giving out routine assignments. Delegation means giving part of the supervisor's job to a subordinate. It is justifiable when: (1) it is

used as a way to train subordinates who may be promoted, (2) it is used to motivate skilled subordinates by giving them a share in the supervisory work, or (3) it is necessary because the supervisor is not able to handle all of the supervisory tasks alone. The supervisor should delegate only if the supervisor is confident that the subordinate will be able to handle the task successfully.

FOREMAN, STRAWBOSS, AND BUFFER

The first line supervisor actually plays several roles. These roles involve translating management needs into specific work assignments and bridging the gaps between higher superiors and firefighters. The first line supervisor's roles include:

Foreman: Technical skills enable the supervisor to determine how to do the job and to train subordinates.

Strawboss: The limited power of the first line supervisor preserves the close relationship between the first line supervisor and firefighters. For higher superiors it is advantageous to work through a first line supervisor who is close to firefighters.

Buffer: The first line supervisor moderates the flow of information and emotional reactions between higher



superiors and firefighters, so that problems can be resolved prudently.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Many supervisors adopt the tone and style of the supervisor who was their first boss or has been their boss for a long time. Still, it is common for supervisors to make some change in style to reflect the style of their current superior. Often the higher superior prefers that supervisors use the same style. However, the style of the higher superior may be ineffective in some cases. The supervisor should study the tactics of higher superiors and other supervisors to learn from them what wins cooperation from subordinates and what alienates them.

Attempts to define leadership in terms of personality traits have proven generally unsuccessful. Not all leaders are energetic, of superior intelligence, creative, etc. Not all people who are of superior intelligence, energetic, etc. make effective leaders. However, leaders do tend to have certain skills. These are not innate personality traits but rather skills which are learned.

The skills of effective first line leaders include:

1. Technical knowledge
2. Ability to explain things
3. Ability to write clearly
4. Ability to set priorities
5. Ability to elicit cooperation from others

To a large extent, leadership consists of a good match between three things:

- A. The supervisory style of the leader.
- B. The nature of the work, routine or not.
- C. The subordinate's desire for a certain kind of supervision.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

There are many ways of classifying leadership styles of supervisors. One style has been described as the "supply sergeant" style; it consists of just providing subordinates with basic instructions and the tools they need and then leaving them alone. Another style is the "boss" style; it consists of just giving direct orders to do this or that. The "selling" style consists of combining specific directions with some "stroking" of the subordinate to enhance motivation. The "good shepherd" style consists of being most

The most common error is for supervisors to concern themselves almost exclusively with the work that their subordinates are supposed to do rather than focus on the work which must be done by a supervisor.

concerned about the well being of the subordinates, believing that if the supervisor takes care of the subordinates, the subordinates will take care of the work. There is no universally accepted list of supervisory styles, although there is a generally accepted custom of describing supervisory styles as more or less "authoritarian" or "democratic". Democratic styles stress participation by subordinates in decision making.

PREFERENCES OF SUBORDINATES

There is a tendency for more and more subordinates, especially younger new workers, to prefer democratic styles of supervision. However, many subordinates prefer a more authoritarian "boss" style. They just want to know what is expected of them, and they will do it.

In general, more educated and more skilled workers prefer to have some say in how work is done. They fare better under more democratic, participatory supervision. However, for more democratic supervision with less close supervision to be effective, even with these subordinates, the subordinates themselves must be well motivated. Poorly motivated subordinates require more direction and closer supervision.

THE NATURE OF THE WORK

The nature of the work itself is the third factor in determining leadership effectiveness. Direct, authoritarian supervision is more effective when the work itself is more routine or more hazardous. Highly automated work or work which is so simple that it leaves no room for creativity, does not call for democratic discussion of how the work is to be done.

Hazardous work requires short and direct orders, fixed roles and set procedures for handling situations. Participation in decision making is seldom feasible at the scene of the emergency, although participation in planning procedures and in critical review of how past incidents were handled is desirable.

In nonhazardous work it is often desirable to design jobs with "job enlargement" in mind. Job enlargement consists

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SUPERVISOR...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Not all leaders are energetic, of superior intelligence, creative, etc. Not all people who are of superior intelligence, energetic, etc. make effective leaders. However, leaders do tend to have certain skills. These are not innate personality traits but rather skills which are learned.

of putting together a package of small tasks, so that the individual's assignment contains variety. Greater variety tends to improve worker interest and motivation. It also reduces the errors which come from monotonous work.

Although most people like some job enlargement, there are some people who prefer to do just one highly repetitive task over and over again. On assembly lines such workers learn to do the work without thinking about it. Because the work is simple and repetitive, they can think about other things while working and perhaps carry on conversations with nearby coworkers.

"Job enrichment" consists of giving a person a goal to accomplish and allowing the individual to determine how

and possibly when to get it done. For example, an individual might be assigned to provide routine maintenance and checks of an electrical generator. A minimum of one check a month may be required. Beyond that, the individual decides what days to do it. Likewise minimum checks might be mandated, but the individual might decide to go beyond the minimum in the maintenance routine.

The key idea in job enrichment is to make the individual one's own boss within the standards set for the work. It fosters individual responsibility and an individual sense of accomplishment for the particular task assigned to this person.

Job enrichment has limitations in hazardous work. In emergency situations one is not most ready to be inventive in selecting what means to use to get a job done. Extensive drilling and following preset patterns of actions are necessary for the efficient functioning of individuals in hazardous situations.

In summary, leadership is the ability to match the supervisor's style with the preferred style of the subordinate and/or the nature of the assignment. The nature of the assignment can be controlled by the supervisor to some extent by means of job enlargement or job enrichment. The supervisor may also be able to control his/her own style somewhat by practicing different styles of supervision with different subordinates, according to their preferences, skill levels and motivational levels.

Studies of supervisors have shown that most supervisors do use at least two different styles of supervision. They adapt to individual subordinates and to particular situations. This is the essence of effective leadership.

Next Month: Part III—Decision Making

SOURCE: FIREFIGHTING PROCEDURES MANUAL, FDNY

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BASIC TENANTS OF LEADERSHIP

Chief Dennis Compton — Mesa, AZ, Fire Department

I was reading an article recently that described important characteristics in leaders. The author focused on such things as time management, writing skills, and accessibility. Each of these represent important management skills or practices, but they may not be critical leadership characteristics. Although they are important to supervisory or managerial success, there is more to consider when measuring leadership. Strong leadership is a key issue in basic supervision as well as in the management of processes, programs, and people.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

If we revisit leadership concepts developed as long ago as 600 BC in China, Lao Tsu professed that one leads primarily by example. This "leading by example" concept is stressed in every leadership class or book that we have ever been exposed to. The inability or unwillingness to put this concept into practice undermines a leader's effectiveness as much as any other factor. The leader who lacks the ability to lead "themselves" and set an appropriate example is eventually resisted or resented by the group they are attempting to lead. An

important element of leadership involves modeling the behaviors and expectations we have of others...as best we can...every day. Otherwise, the message we send is clear, "Do as I say, not as I do." As leaders, we are always teaching others by our example...good or bad. That is an unavoidable reality.

RESPECTFUL TREATMENT OF OTHERS AND MUTUAL TRUST

A basic concept of developing individuals or groups in an organization involves the way leaders act out the level of respect (or lack of respect) they feel towards those they are in place to lead. We were all human beings before anyone was given rank or organizational status. It is unacceptable when people act in a way that is disrespectful towards each other in any setting. This results in conflict that can interfere with the delivery of

Being assigned the formal position of supervisor or manager does not make a person a leader.

the mission. Leaders will only receive respect when they give it to others first.

Mutual trust is a key to teamwork. We can make effective leadership as simple or as complex as we wish... let me say it simply. People do not trust leaders they do not respect, and they do not respect leaders who are disrespectful towards them. This simple fact serves as the "right of passage" to almost everything else about leading others. People cannot be inspired to behave or perform in a certain way unless they feel a sense of mutual respect with the leader...which leads to mutual trust...both of which are critical components of a positive relationship.

COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION

Leaders who excel also communicate a passionate commitment to the mission of the organization. Being able to clearly define what the leader expects of others and communicate a vision of current and future requirements to meet the mission, serve to set exceptional leaders apart from others. Acting out agendas that are separate

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TENANTS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Acting out agendas that are separate and apart from the mission is sure to dilute the leader's effectiveness with others in the organization.

and apart from the mission is sure to dilute the leader's effectiveness with others in the organization.

A friend once told me that some of the most important attributes from which to measure leadership relationships are the leader's actions relating to:

- Fairness in decision-making
- Loyalty to others
- Respect for people
- Equality within the group
- A sense of joy from work.

I consider these to be words of wisdom. When combined with other attributes, especially those previously mentioned, they describe a positive and effective foundation for leadership. Being assigned the formal position of supervisor or manager does not make a person a leader. I witness acts of exceptional leadership every day within the Mesa Fire Department and other organizations within which I interact. Many are performed by people with no formal position of rank or hierarchical status in the system.

I wish I could make basic leadership tenants more complicated than this, but it isn't. Although nobody masters all of the variables involved in excellent leadership, valuing the things discussed in this article, day in and day out, will help meet the challenge....which is to become the leader we value in others.

Dennis Compton is the Fire Chief in Mesa, Arizona. He previously served as Assistant Fire Chief in the Phoenix Fire Department. During a career that spans over 30 years, Dennis is a well-known speaker and is the author of many publications, including a series of books titled, "When



FDIC 2001 RAFFLE

The Fire Department Training Network would like to thank **Total Fire Group** of Dayton, Ohio, for donating the Ben Franklin 2 helmet given away at the 2001 FDIC.

The winner of the helmet was:

Dave Sherfick
Brown Township Fire-Rescue



COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

25 Ways for Officers to Improve Company Safety

Ray McCormack, Lieutenant - FDNY

The fire officer's primary responsibility is the safety of firefighters operating under his control and those around him. The following is a list of ways to improve the safe daily operations of your company.

1. Identify your company and the fire location precisely for the incident commander. For example, "Ladder 60, second floor, A wing, corner apartment, exposure 2-3."
2. Look for potential hazards around the fire station. Are objects placed too close to a pole hole? Is equipment stored safely?
3. Maintain radio discipline. Keep messages brief and to the point and avoid stepping on someone else's message.
4. Use your response area to sharpen everyone's skills. Observe new construction or ask how a firefighter might force a particular door.
5. Check that your company is correctly logged in when assigned to a location by the command post before proceeding to that area.
6. Verbally confirm that all members are ready to proceed and are properly equipped prior to entering the fire area.

The fire officer is charged with keeping his company safe. This responsibility can never be taken lightly. Operating safely doesn't mean that aggressiveness is abandoned. Both tactics are compatible. The trick is knowing when to apply one in a larger dose than the other.

7. Train engine pump operators to inform their officer of any difficulties in getting water or when obtaining water from a limited source.
8. Gather as much information as possible on the floor below the fire so that your operations on the fire floor will be that much easier.
9. Keep your company together at potential collapse operations. Stay well out of the collapse zone and restrict any freelancing.
10. Break in new members slowly. Allow them to work their way up the responsibility ladder. Assign them the roof position during the day or the nozzle at outside fires.
11. Insist that members be protected (even overly protected) on medical calls to avoid infectious disease accidents.
12. Avoid tunnel vision. Get the whole picture so that you're not working against yourself or endangering others.
13. Take a rest period. Some firefighters may be more drained than others and uneasy about asking for time.
14. Prepare the apparatus for service on your arrival at the station after a job and before members wash up.
15. Drill on company operations such as search techniques, hoseline positions, and intercompany communications.
16. Get your company together and leave the building quickly when you've been ordered out. Don't plead your case for staying. Remember, the IC has the big picture.

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TENANTS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

FIRE RESCUE

25 WAYS FOR COMPANY OFFICERS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

17. Train your drivers to drive defensively. When returning to quarters, give pedestrians and other drivers a brake, even if they don't deserve it. Being cooperative will add only a few seconds to your trip.
18. Crosstrain your firefighters to raise aerials and get water from the pumper, just in case.
19. Preplan a standard designated company meeting place (the rear of the first-due pumper) for emergency roll calls.
20. Call for additional help early. It's better to err on the side of too much help than to have to explain why you thought you could handle it alone.
21. Stick to the basics when training. Teach the skills that are used most often and that every firefighter needs to be proficient in.
22. Don't take risky shortcuts. They tend to backfire at the worst time.
23. Encourage your firefighters to speak up about potential hazards. The officer can't see everything. Sharp firefighters make the officer's job easier.
24. Verbally confirm that the apparatus and equipment were checked at the start of the shift and are ready for fire duty.
25. Keep abreast of your firefighters' location and frequently check on their progress or difficulties they may be encountering.

The fire officer is charged with keeping his company safe. This responsibility can never be taken lightly. Operating safely doesn't mean that aggressiveness is abandoned. Both tactics are compatible. The trick is knowing when to apply one in a larger dose than the other.

This article first appeared in Fire Engineering Magazine, December 1996.

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COMPANY OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Company officers are the most important people on the fireground. Highly appropriate strategy developed by chief officers depends on the capability of company officers to translate it into effective tactics and direct the efforts of the firefighters they supervise to attain the desired results.

If a company officer does not do his job well, the chief officer's strategy will be battered by ineptitude.

Where the extinguishment efforts and flames meet. On the other hand, alert, adaptive company officers who know how to lead their men to extra efforts and take advantage of conditions in their piece of the fireground can provide that extra support that makes a chief's strategic plan look inspired.

The company officer, who is face to face with the heart of the action, must use common sense—common sense sharpened by experience, training and education. It's his job to fill out the tactical details that carry a chief's strategy to a successful conclusion.

THE ENGINE COMPANY OFFICER

The first-in company officer must begin sizing up the fire when he arrives ahead of the first-alarm chief officer. What is equally important is that the first-in officer and every other company officer must continue to size up the conditions within his operating area.

For both engine and ladder company officers, the safety of their firefighters always should be foremost in their minds. They must evaluate the structural integrity of the building—or their section of the building—not only at the start of operations, but throughout the time they are in the building.

As each officer works, he must observe the effect his company is having on the fire. Is his company's line darkening down the area? If not, what will the fire be doing in the next few minutes? What is needed to halt the progress of the fire and eventually extinguish it? What is the fire doing to the structural integrity of the building and thus the safety of the company?

The company officer needs to look for these questions and give the answers to his chief officer, who at working fires cannot give undivided attention to each company under his command. On the other hand, no chief appreciates a company officer who is chatty with trivia.

When he is first on the fireground, the company officer has a decisive responsibility to put a stream into operation with a flow rate that is appropriate for the volume of fire. At most fires, that first stream should darken down the flames. However, there are other fires where the largest

rate of flow the first-in engine company can develop can only confine the fire or perhaps only protect an exposure. Whatever the situation may be, it is the company officer's decision that makes the most of it. Attacking the main body of fire with an inadequate stream that would be adequate for protecting an exposure can be the first step toward losing the building. Protecting the exposure can buy time for developing the necessary fire streams.

When an engine company is "holding its ground," the building and contents are being consumed by the fire, so an officer must make every effort to keep his line advancing. A word radioed to the pump operator may increase the rate of flow, or it may be necessary to request the chief to get another line in the area.

Sometimes all the officer has to do is give a few words of encouragement to his nozzleman to get the line moving ahead. This is particularly true when descending stairs into a cellar fire when conditions improve rapidly as the hose crew nears the bottom of the stairs.

There are other times when a request to a chief officer for increased ventilation is all that is needed to improve firefighting conditions. Sometimes both ventilation and a larger rate of application of water are needed. The company officer will be

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RESPONSIBILITIES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

the first to recognize this, and it is his responsibility to act.

THE LADDER COMPANY OFFICER

Different types of responsibilities face the ladder company officer. He should be thoroughly familiar with the capabilities of each of his men and give them fireground assignments in accordance with their capabilities. Some may be particularly good roof ventilation men while others may excel in search and rescue. When the fire situation is not critical, a man can be assigned to a task that will give him needed experience to sharpen his ability in that type of work.

While the engine company officer generally keeps his men working as a team, the ladder company officer has the added responsibility of knowing where each man in his company is working. It is a good idea for the ladder company officer to work with the man—or men—assigned to the most critical job. The officer provides supervision and uses his knowledge and experience to overcome any difficulties.

The ladder company officer should be so well trained in the standard operating procedures of his department that he can begin the proper ventilation—horizontal or vertical—of a building without waiting for the first-alarm chief to issue an order. He should be able to supervise the search of a building and provide accurate information on fire extension.

For both engine and ladder company officers, the safety of their firefighters always should be foremost in their minds. They must evaluate the structural integrity of the building—or their section of the building—not only at the start of operations, but throughout the time they are in the building.

Safety is of particular concern during overhaul because there is a tendency for firefighters to relax and become careless at this time. Company officers bear the responsibility to remain alert for dangerous conditions and working procedures.

Source: 2001 FDIC Classroom Proceedings. Original article also appeared in the May 2000 Fire Engineering Magazine.

Source: *Modern Suburban Firefighting*—available from Fire Engineering Books and Videos by calling 1-800-752-9768.



COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

THE COMPANY OFFICER AND RESPECT

Bob Hoff, Battalion Chief (retired), Chicago Fire Department

When the firefighter dons the white shirt and bugle, many things change. You are now a leader, a teacher, a counselor, a safety officer, and role model.

As a company officer, you must make it your personal goal to be the leader of that company under your command, whether it be as a permanent assignment with the same crew or in a department where you work with different crews every shift. Leadership, mentoring, and training cannot be accomplished from the sidelines, so suit up and get in the game. It is never too late to change for the better.

Contrary to what many may think, firefighters have little or no respect for a wishy-washy officer who is afraid to enforce the rules and orders of their superior officers for fear of not being liked or accepted. They feel that an officer who is shirking his or her leadership or teaching duties will not have the intestinal fortitude to be their supervisor on the emergency scene where their lives are at risk.

Every firefighter, especially one who aspires to become an officer, is constantly watching his or her lieutenant, captain, and chief officer for traits which can be copied and stored away until needed. Then on that day of promotion, the firefighter made lieutenant will bring out what he or she has learned by the observations of his or her former officers and attempt to incorporate the best examples and skills into his or her own method of operation.

In one officer, he or she may admire integrity and honesty, even in the face of ridicule. In another officer, his or her energetic drive and unrelenting enthusiasm for the fire service are most outstanding. In another, it may be simple bravery, which in our business is sometimes unseen, obstructed by smoke or bad press. From another officer, it may be self-discipline, as well as discipline imposed upon those who need it! Some other traits, which are often over-

looked, are those of common sense, common courtesy, and consideration for others, which in today's world do not seem so common anymore.

No firefighter who becomes a good officer can take all of the credit for his or her success. Most of the credit goes to former officers who strove to give good examples to the men and women under them. It now becomes the duty of today's officer to continue to become more professional, to learn, teach, train, and keep your people safe. Remember, though, your reputation precedes you. If you are not dedicated to the true meaning of our existence, the "troops" will know.

Respect is earned. It does not come with the promotion. Make yourself better each day, and never coast along, because it will only hurt those who want to do a good job.

As company officers, remember your priorities in this order:

1. Concern and care for the firefighter.
2. Concern and care for the apparatus and equipment.
3. Concern and care for the fire station.

When those are in order, your responsibilities and role as an officer will run smoother.

In memory of those in the fire service who were taken from their families and co-workers while in the performance of their duty, we should make it our priority to contribute to the betterment of the fire service.

Your contribution (large or small) to education, training, and safety will improve our profession greatly. This improved performance will ultimately save more lives and property while reducing our risks for many years to come.

YOU GET AUTHORITY FROM RANK; YOU GET RESPECT FROM YOUR ACTIONS.

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Roll Call and the Company Officer

Bob Hoff, Director of Training — Chicago Fire Department

It is the responsibility of the Company Officer (or the person acting in that capacity) to supervise relief and roll call each morning or evening when shift change takes place.

This article provides a list of tasks to be completed by the Company Officer and a time frame in which to complete them, that should help ensure an efficient change of

An efficient change of shift will help lead to a safe workday for everyone.

COMPANY OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES UPON REPORTING FOR DUTY:

- Report for duty early so that the person you are relieving can brief you on past events; and as a courtesy to that person.
- Be in proper uniform (**lead by example**). Put your equipment in service on the apparatus immediately.
- Checkout SCBA/ pass alarms, portable radio and make note of same (follow your departments S.O.G.'s)
- Read your company journal of past shifts events in order to update you on pertinent information.

.....
It is the responsibility of the Company Officer (or the person acting in that capacity) to supervise relief and roll call each morning or evening when shift change takes place.

Examples:

- **Fire activity-** what emergency events has the company responded to?
- **Department communications-** have any orders, memos etc. been distributed during your time off. - read and review with all members at Roll Call.
- **Staffing-** is your Company Staffing at the departments required level-are personnel detailed out, on sick leave, traded tour of duty, etc.
- **Equipment and apparatus information-** is there any new equipment that has been placed in service, is there any equipment that has been taken out of service for repairs, has any equipment been moved or relocated on the apparatus, is any equipment in need of repairs.
- **Scheduled Training-** do you have a daily/monthly training schedule: if so be prepared for upcoming drills.

CHECK SCHEDULES FOR THE DAYS ACTIVITIES:

- Daily apparatus work schedule
- Daily firehouse duties
- In service inspections/preplans

PLAN OTHER NECESSARY ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR SHIFT:

- Apparatus inventory
- Drill of the day
- Other special events

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ROLL CALL...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

SUPERVISE RELIEF OF COMPANY PERSONNEL AS MEMBERS REPORT FOR DUTY:

- Check members fitness for duty
- Ensure proper relief, for example FF/EMT-B, FF/EMT-P or qualified apparatus driver must be relieved by another member of equal certification.
- Make sure members are in proper uniform-not only is it required, but it is also necessary for safety reasons and so that we represent our departments with pride and professionalism.
- Give assignments to members as they report for duty so they know what is expected of them. For example;

Engine Company: who is on the nozzle, who is back up Truck Company: who is search and rescue, outside, vent, roof etc. - assign portable radios. A little chat at each roll call lets the troops know what is expected.

- Make sure that all members have checked and inventoried their equipment (SCBA/PASS, portable radios, hose lines, hand tools, hand can, EMS equipment, etc.)
- Company Officers: you are responsible for your crew's wellbeing.

ROLL CALL LOCATION:

Roll Call should take place on the apparatus floor. This is where the Company Officer can inspect his or her people while they perform their daily inspections.

- Review assignments with all members. This confirms assignments

FIRE RESCUE

previously given when shift relief took place before Roll Call or official starting time.

- By reaffirming assignments it also allows members assigned to other units in the same firehouse to know who is doing what.
Example:
Engine crew will know who the forcible entry team is. The Engine crew will know who is backing them up from the ambulance crew etc.
- Discuss Tactics: Talk about building construction, hazards, preplans, weather conditions, critique and past incidents etc.
- Discuss pertinent information with the group: Department communications, events of previous shifts, new equipment, and defective equipment...
- Inform everyone of the schedule for the day/evening-training, apparatus and housework, in service inspections etc.

AFTER ROLL CALL

- Ensure completion of apparatus inventory, oversee inventory with all members. Remember it is everyones responsibility to be able to locate and operate the equipment and to operate the apparatus.
- Ensure checkout/inspection of auxiliary or ancillary apparatus and equipment that is in your quarters.
Example: Reserve apparatus, specialized apparatus, dive truck, back up EMS units. Etc.

SOME ADDITIONAL POINTS

- If not already in place in your department; have an accountability system in place I.E.: List of riding assignments in cab.
- Show enthusiasm- it can be contagious.
- Get everyone involved.
- Talk to and treat members, as you would want to be treated. Courtesy and respect go a long way.
- Remember as a Company Officer you are a counselor, problem solver, safety officer, leader and role model; so don't ignore potential problems-address them because it is your responsibility. This will add to the presence of a safe work shift.

COMPANY OFFICERS: "SPEED OF THE LEADER- SPEED OF THE TEAM"

ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR PRIORITIES:

1. The Firefighter and Paramedics
2. The Apparatus and Equipment
3. The Fire House

Some may question the use of the term "Firehouse" instead of "Fire Station"- The Fire house is where we live together and work together, and who lives in a house is a family and that is what we are!

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COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

Decision Making for COMPANY OFFICERS

Traditionally decision making has been seen as a five step process:

1. Defining or analyzing the problem
2. Thinking up possible solutions (e.g., brainstorming)
3. Selecting the best solution (e.g., costs/benefits analysis)
4. Implementing the best solution
5. Follow-up to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution

: could add, making necessary adaptations.

In practice, however, most decision making in large organizations is (1) incremental and (2) procedural. This is especially true in public agencies as distinct from private organizations and especially true at the front line level in organizations.

Incremental decision making is making decisions one step at a time. Problems are analyzed only superficially, with the understanding that many problems are very complex and have many "causes". Often it is unnecessary to know all the causes or ramifications of a problem, even if they could be known; problem solving can begin before one has a full understanding of the problem. The philosophy of incremental decision making calls for the decision maker to take a "step on a largely intuitive basis.

If the first step leads to some partial success in solving the problem, another step is taken. If the first step seems

to do no good or to be somewhat amiss, the first step is corrected or a completely different, new first step is taken.

Incremental decision making starts to implement a solution faster than the logical five-step philosophy of decision making. But it takes more time to work out a complete solution to a problem. Incremental decision making reduces the chances of major errors. Incremental decision making often takes the form of pilot projects or other "experimental" or "demonstration" programs.

Most first line decision making in public agencies is "procedural." That is, decisions are made on the basis of the agency's existing procedures.

Problems are seen and analyzed in terms of whatever procedures already exist. In a sense, existing procedures are prefabricated solutions. Problem solving consists of defining a problem in a way that will match one of the existing solutions. For example, suppose an agency has three disciplinary procedures: (1) a notation in an official journal or log; (2) a minor penalty imposed by a local superior following a specific procedure; and (3) a major disciplinary action by the agency following a specific procedure. When a disciplinary problem occurs, the superior's decision making consists of fitting the facts of the case to the

requirements of one of the existing "solutions".

Similarly, at a fire scene or other operation, most fire departments have standardized procedures. The superior's decision is basically a decision to implement the procedure ("solution") which best fits the facts of the present problem.

"Post mortem" discussions after major incidents help to refine procedures and sharpen the abilities of superiors to choose the most suitable procedures in future situations. In this way, evaluation of past decisions feeds back into the decision making on future occasions.

PRIORITIES

When it comes to areas where procedures do not exist, are unclear, or seem to conflict with one another, organizations work out new procedures or create rules to govern which procedures apply.

However, when situations are murky at the first line supervisor level, decision making is largely a matter of understanding the priorities of the organization and one's own immediate superior.

Superiors differ in how much priority they give to certain parts of the supervisor's job. For example, how would your current or most recent superior rate the following in terms of

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DECISION MAKING...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

priorities from 1 to 5? Put #1 next to the items with highest priority, then #2, etc.

- _____ Getting paperwork done
- _____ Avoiding complaints from the public
- _____ Avoiding conflicts in the firehouse
- _____ Maintaining equipment
- _____ Training new firefighters

What would your own priorities be? Rank the above items in terms of your own priorities by putting a number from 1 to 5 in front of each item.

In setting priorities many supervisors adopt the priorities of their immediate superiors. This is a pragmatic way to reduce the potential for conflicts between the supervisor and the next higher superior. However, there are some general principles which govern the priorities of most public service agencies. See related article in the August 2001 issue of FIRESCUE Interactive.

EXERCISE: GIVING ORDERS

A. Stating directions in a positive way, not negatively. Avoid the use of "no, not, don't," etc., except as a contrast. For example, rephrase:

- Don't be late:
- Do not leave a mess:
- Do not do it that way:
- Don't let it happen again:

B. Speaking softly by sprinkling orders with words which take the autocratic tone out of the orders, such as, "please", "try to", "maybe", "Could you...?" Rephrase:

- You're wrong:
- Do it over:
- Get it done today:
- Clean up the place:

C. Being job centered rather than self centered. Take the "I" and "me" out of job instructions. Emphasize doing the "work" rather than pleasing the boss. It usually helps to speak in terms of "we" and "us," which emphasize that the supervisor and the subordinate share responsibility for doing the job well. Rephrase:

- When I tell you to do something:
- I'm not satisfied:
- I want it done today:

DIRECTING

The concept of "chain of command" is the idea that orders, or other communications, should go from one level of management to the next without skipping over any level. For example, a chief should issue an order to a captain, who in turn should pass it on to a lieutenant, who in turn should pass it on to a firefighter (if all are present at the time). This is a traditional military concept, which was intended to avoid the confusion which would result if the person at the bottom of the command chain were to get conflicting orders from different superiors. However, in the military and even more so in other kinds of settings it is increasingly common to "bypass" the chain of command. For higher superiors, bypassing the chain of command once in a while gives them better rapport with people at the bottom of the organization.

One of the most difficult tasks for the newly appointed supervisor is giving orders, especially if the subordinates were previously the coworkers of the new supervisor. For giving routine orders to cooperative subordinates, the supervisor should practice certain skills in how to word orders so that subordinates do not resent them. It is far more common for subordinates to complain about the way an order is given than to complain about the order itself. (see Exercise inset)

IMPLICIT BARGAINS

Often there are "implicit bargains" between the supervisor and the higher superior as well as between the supervisor and subordinates. An implicit bargain is an informal agreement that as long as each side does certain things (or refrains from doing certain things), there will be no trouble between them. Often it is a matter of taking care of the other person's priorities.

Enacting a superior's policies becomes a special problem when the policies appear to be arbitrary or unnecessarily troublesome to subordinates. *It is especially difficult when the supervisor personally disagrees with a policy which the supervisor is obliged to enforce.* There are several ways in which supervisors deal with situations like this.

An implicit bargain is one approach to this kind of situation. Essentially, this sort of implicit bargain reads, "Go along with this, and I will ease off on something else." The consequences of this bargain depend on what the supervisor is trading off for compliance with this new policy. If

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DECISION MAKING...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

the supervisor lacks a good relationship with subordinates, the supervisor is more likely to try this approach.

A second way supervisors deal with unpopular rules which they must enforce is by pointing out that they did not make the rules but are obliged to enforce them because higher superiors are putting emphasis on them. In other words, the supervisor pleads that he/she is helpless in this matter and is stuck with the enforcement role. This "straw-boss" approach can work for a supervisor who enjoys a good relationship with the work group.

Another approach to the situation of having to enforce an unpopular policy is to interpret the policy in a way which obviates the undesirable aspects of it. This is done by determining that the policy applies only under certain unusual conditions or at least does not apply to the present situation. Either a very narrow interpretation of the words of the policy or a very broad interpretation of them may render the policy harmless.

ASSIGNING TASKS

Logical Assignments

Occasionally an individual has such an unusual talent that a job is designed to fit this particular individual. But ordinarily, jobs are designed and then individuals are fitted to the jobs. In the matter of assignments, then, it is necessary to fit the individual to the job.

In most emergency services and in most civil service (even nonemergency) organizations, it is customary to design somewhat specialized jobs and to make individuals somewhat interchangeable. If the job is restricted in scope and rather easy to learn, high levels of individual skill are not required.

The more complex the work, the more the skill levels and personal interests of individual subordinates become a factor in assignments. The concept of "logical assignments" suggests that individuals should be matched (by skill and interest) to their assignments. But if all jobs are simple and have about the same level of interest built into them, there is not much scope for logical assignments. When the work itself is complex or the situation is especially demanding (e.g., in a hazardous situation), logical assignments work best.

Equitable Assignments

For work which is not complex or rewarding in itself, the supervisor has to be concerned more about providing equitable assignments. That is, the supervisor must give a roughly equal amount of work to each of the subordinates.

One way to provide equitable assignments is to design jobs with similar levels of skill and interest built into them. This is often difficult to do for all jobs. Some tasks have more status or are more pleasant than others.

Another way to provide equity in assignments is to rotate assignments, or at least to rotate the particular assignments which are notably more rewarding or more undesirable.

Training Assignments

Assignments should also serve training functions.

- A. New personnel should be given assignments of increasing complexity and responsibility. They should generally stay at assignments in this order until they have become proficient at them. It is not desirable to have a predetermined length of time in a particular assignment.
- B. Experienced personnel should have some rotation in assignments, especially in the assignments related to hazardous work, so that they can fill in for other personnel when necessary.
- C. Experienced personnel who are especially skilled in doing certain tasks should be assigned to help new personnel in learning these tasks.

Soft Assignments

Most units, at least on occasion, have some "soft" assignments. If at all possible, these assignments should be rotated. An exception is the situation in which a particular subordinate needs a soft assignment at the present time because that subordinate is recovering from an injury, is having difficult personal problems at the moment, or some other special situation. One should resist making soft assignments on the basis of seniority, since this creates a division between older and younger members of the work team.

If a task is too much for one person but really too little for two persons:

- A. In hazardous assignments, assign two persons.
- B. In nonhazardous assignments, assign one person. A major cause of inefficiency is overstaffing. When overstaffing occurs, personnel know that they do not have to perform at their individual best level and, in addition, excess individuals impede the efficiency of those who are doing the work at the moment.

PROBLEM: Assignments of a routine nature in the fire station were given to all personnel. One firefighter has fin-

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ished the given assignment, while all the others are still working at their assignments. What should you as supervisor do?

CONTROLLING

"Controlling" work is a management term which means controlling the quality of work performance. Hence, controlling work means checking that it is being done properly. The supervisor cannot assume that a job is being done properly simply because someone has been assigned to do it. Sooner or later the supervisor must check on the accomplishment of the work.

In hazardous work situations the supervisor must check on what subordinates are doing at very frequent intervals as a way to ensure that subordinates are not at risk and everything is under control. Close supervision is mandatory in hazardous situations. That is why the supervisor should not be doing any of the operational work at the scene; the supervisor must be free to supervise.

In nonhazardous situations the best supervision consists of frequent but very brief contacts with personnel while they are doing a job. A fifteen-second spot check ("How's it going?") is all it takes to control the work of a well trained and well motivated subordinate. A few such checks while a job is being done are more effective than checking on the job after it has been finished, although that is necessary too.

In future issues we'll look at evaluation, motivation and discipline.

Source: Firefighting Procedures Manual, FDNY

APRIL 8-14, 2002

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COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

OVERBEARING COMPANY OFFICERS

MICROMANAGERS RUN RISK OF STIFLING MOTIVATION, INNOVATION

The following—originally titled '*Overbearing Bosses*'—is an excerpt from the business section of the local newspaper, it is equally applicable to fire department company officers.

Shannon Lindenfeld's boss bought every employee a three-ring binder and instructed them to print out each e-mail she sent them and file it by date and subject.

Terry Ostrach's boss scolded her for buying two staplers and tape dispensers instead of one each—even though the items were on sale at half-price.

Nikki Barnes' boss combed staffers' reports for insignificant changes she could make, and if she found none would change the margins and font.

Call them micromanaging, controlling or just plain annoying: Managers who obsess like nervous stage parents over every detail of their underlings' performance can decay not only employee morale but the effectiveness of the entire workplace.

"People don't like to have someone looking over their shoulders at all times and saying, 'How are you doing this?'" said Karen Battroe, a Longwood, FL, career consultant.

Scrutinized workers start out feeling irritated and can become stressed out, angry or depressed under bosses who smother freedom and individuality. Instead of getting excited about their jobs, they lose the sense of ownership and accomplishment that makes working rewarding.

Multiply that by the number of workers the micromanaging boss supervises and—in the worst case—you've got a department drained of motivation and innovation, said Battroe.

"After a while, you really start to lose your self-confidence," recalled Barnes, who described her former manager at a Dallas cosmetics company as a "nut" who barraged the staff with e-mails and dictated everything from who was allowed to eat lunch together to the color of tissue paper used in outgoing packages.

Barnes confronted her boss about her controlling ways, but it did little good. "She thanked me for letting her know, but then she kept doing it. I

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Call them micromanaging, controlling or just plain annoying: Company Officers who obsess like nervous stage parents over every detail of their underlings' performance can decay not only company morale but the effectiveness of the entire company.



OVERBEARING...CONTINUED FROM PAGE II

Scrutinized workers start out feeling irritated... Instead of getting excited about their jobs, they lose the sense of ownership and accomplishment that makes working rewarding.

"I couldn't handle it. I started looking for another job," said Barnes.

Micromanagers hurt themselves, too. Over-involved in subordinates' tasks, they don't leave themselves time for higher-level leadership and planning, said Mimi Hull, a Maitland, FL, management trainer.

"Bosses should gradually allow underlings more freedom as they get better at their jobs," said Hull. "That makes everybody more competent and capable."

Do bosses wake up in the morning and say, "I'm going to control my workers today"? It sure might seem that way. But most don't.

Some managers are inexperienced and don't realize they don't have to oversee the placement of each paper clip. Others are perfectionists who worry they are the only ones who can do the job right.

Both of these types are relatively benign and easy to deal with. In the first case, often all that employees have to do is talk to the boss. Now, that doesn't mean snapping, "Leave me alone, you stalker!" Be calm and non-confrontational. Get a group of co-workers together, if possible, so you don't look like a lone whiner.

"Use 'I' statements: Tell your boss, 'I sometimes feel interrupted; I would like to work with more autonomy,'" said Patricia Evans, author of "Controlling People: How to Recognize, Understand, and Deal With People Who Try to Control You".

With perfectionist bosses, the key is gaining their trust. First, make sure the problem isn't really you. Are you often late, sloppy or unreliable? Are you the only one who feels micromanaged? If so, improve your own performance rather than blaming the boss for checking up on you. But if the problem really does seem to be those in charge, "try to improve their comfort level," Hull said. "Hopefully, they will back off."

Micromanagers hurt themselves, too. Over-involved in subordinates' tasks, they don't leave themselves time for higher-level leadership and planning.

How to do this? When you get an assignment, try to define it from the start. Ask your boss questions like, "What's our top priority on this? What format would you prefer?" The more you communicate at the beginning, the less the boss will fret that you don't get it.

Also, buck your instincts. Instead of trying to avoid and hide from a micromanager, open up. Ask, "At what point should I check in with you? How should I keep you updated?" Work out a compromise, such as meeting for 30 min-

Insecure bosses rarely recognize their real motivations. Instead, they convince themselves that their employees are idiots who must be handheld like kindergartners.

utes a week or sending an e-mail every day updating your progress. It's better than being constantly interrupted.

Finally, don't develop an ulcer over minor issues. If you like to use the typeface Times New Roman for reports and your boss prefers Arial, and that's her only quirk, learn to like Arial. Some things just aren't worth agonizing over.

That's not to say all micromanagers can be coaxed to pry their fingers off the golden staff. The biggest control freaks are so fearful about their own jobs that they're afraid to let others shine.

The biggest control freaks are so fearful about their own jobs that they're afraid to let others shine.

"They say, 'I can't risk it.' They can't risk seeing what their employees can do, how creative they can be," Battoe said. "They cannot let projects go, unlike mentors, who encourage individuals to think on their own."

Insecure bosses rarely recognize their real motivations. Instead, they convince themselves that their employees are idiots who must be handheld like kindergartners.

"There is very little that an employee can do about that," said Stash Boyd, a career coaching consultant. "No matter how good you are, the boss has a personality flaw and is going to see you as otherwise. *In that case, the best option may be to move on.*

Written by Tiffini Theisen (Orlando Sentinel). Reprinted from the Indianapolis Star, April 24, 2002.



TIPS FOR THE FIRST-DUE ENGINE COMPANY OFFICER

Rick Van Sant Jr, Captain - Indianapolis Fire Department

In the fire service, it is often said that as the first line goes, so goes the rest of the fire. Truer words are rarely spoken. Think of some of the times where your company has arrived after the first due engine has begun their stretch. Did the fire go textbook perfect, or was it one calamity after another?

Even fires that go well are generally just organized chaos. But the actions of the first-due engine company can have a lot to do with the overall outcome of the entire incident.

There are a variety of things that can cause the first in company to make mistakes, such as the officers experience and attitude, lack of training on the part of the officer and crew, his ability to convey orders to his crew in a manner which they understand, his inability to look at the big picture (a.k.a. candle-moth syndrome), competition with other companies, or his demeanor when he arrives.

There are dozens of other reasons things go wrong from the beginning our arrival. Some are in our control, and some are not. So lets take a look at some of the most common

mistakes, and some ways to help avoid them.

The first one is panic. It has always amazed me when I hear firefighters screaming into the radio upon their arrival because they have heavy fire showing from a window or two. It amazes me because fire is what we do. It's why they call us firefighters. Yet firefighters consistently act surprised to see fire when they arrive on the scene. If you are not planning on the building being on fire when you get there, even on alarm runs, then you will be behind the eight ball from the moment you arrive. Now your mind must quickly switch modes and you have become the dreaded panicked officer. We all have them. You know the ones. They're yelling, screaming, running, and tripping over hose. They cause everyone around them to think that maybe things are a little worse than they really are. In the meantime, the company that keeps its cool will grab their tools, calmly walk past the first crew and its hyperventilating officer, and put the fire out.

Unfortunately for the other crews on the scene, they usually must play catch-up because the first crew has

probably dropped the ball in a few important areas. Once panic sets in, rational thinking goes out the window, and mistakes are made.

When I was a rookie, a young Lieutenant on my department who was known for being cool under pressure gave me some advice. He said, "When you pull up on the scene, take a deep breath and look at what you've got. Remember, you didn't set the fire. You're only there to put it out. You do the best job that you can, but no matter what, it's just a fire." That was some of the best advice I've ever received on the job, and I pass it on every chance I get.

Now let's talk about the first-in crew on the other end of the spectrum. This is the crew that is hell-bent on getting first water on the fire even if it means blowing off some of their normally expected duties. Competition can be fun but not at the expense of the overall operation. Once again, we've all got them. It's the crew that can see fire from three blocks away, yet they drive by three plugs on the way in because they don't want to take the time to layout for fear of

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ENGINE COMPANY OFFICER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

someone else getting the fire. You hear them on the radio always asking the second engine to lay them a line. They tend to forget that the second engine is carrying their back-up crew. It's the crew that is there to protect them if they fall into a burning basement, or to cover their rears if they are out-gunned by the fire. Now, the 30 seconds that they saved by not laying out may be the 30 seconds that costs them their lives because the back-up crew will be delayed getting to them.

Firefighting has been going on for centuries. The techniques that we use are constantly evolving, but they are time-tested and we use them for a reason. Most standard operating guidelines and procedures are there because of lessons learned:

So here are a few things to think about the next time you and your company are responsible for getting the first line into place.

Start your size-up when you go to work in the morning. Think of all of the things that could come into play such as weather, the day of the week, traffic restrictions, etc. Vary your route to work by a couple of streets each day. You'd be amazed at some of the things you learn about your district by simply looking around. By doing these things, you will already be ahead of the game when the call comes in.

Now, when the call comes in, focus on the obvious.

What did the dispatcher say? What was the dispatcher's tone of voice? Is the address a known area for workers?

While responding, you need to start thinking of what to do when you get there. What about the skill level of your crew? Is it your regular crew? Do you have the utmost confidence in them? Have you trained for different layouts? Now is not the time to wonder if they'll know what to do when you tell them to "reverse out". The main thing to remember is no matter which layout you choose, whenever possible, layout. If you are counting on another crew to bring you water, you may be surprised when they don't make it to the scene before your tank runs dry. Many people will argue that when a call comes in as "possible entrapment", it's ok to blow off the layout and just use the water in the tank in order to save a few seconds. My response is this. Every structure fire has possible entrapment until we have made a thorough search of every room and determined that the structure is all clear. Just because the dispatcher didn't say that there is entrapment doesn't mean we don't search. The time that you save by not laying out may make a difference, but it is a roll of the dice. If you have made the decision to go off of your tank water but find that you don't have enough water to extinguish the

fire, or you haven't found the victim before you run out, then the victim will be in even worse peril as you try to play catch-up. Another simple but often-overlooked thing to remember is to always try to go just past the structure that is on fire. This gives the first-in officer a view of three sides of the building and gives the ladder companies better access.

Now that you have arrived, take that deep breath. It's just a fire. Think about what you're going to say in your size-up and don't key up the radio until you're ready to say it. Keep your voice clear and calm. Your radio voice alone can set the tone for the rest of the companies coming in. Be concise and don't spend valuable time saying things in your size-up that really have no bearing on the situation. When officers give size-ups that resemble a shortened version of War and Peace, others will tend to quit listening and may miss something important. Tell them what you have, what you're doing, then do it.

Operate within the scope of your departments Standard Operating Guidelines. It's what the other companies coming in will be expecting you to do. If you must vary from the norm, communicate it over the radio so that everyone knows what you are doing. It could change what everyone else will need to do; be prepared to justify your actions. Doing something outside the parameters of what is expected can cause a chain reaction that leads to disaster.

Choose the right handline and the right nozzle. Is this a "Big Water" fire or will the pre-connect handle it. If you've chosen a fog nozzle as your weapon of choice, remember to make sure the tip is in the straight stream position before you open it up. Steam is not an interior firefighters friend. I've seen crews almost come to blows when some unenlightened nozzle man fogs the room during interior operations.

And finally, here is a simple tip for the second-in engine crew. Even though the second engine crews most important duty is to protect the first engine crew, they also need to help get that first line in place and operating. Help the first crew get the kinks out of their hose. If a coupling is stuck under a door, get it out. Do whatever it takes to get that first line operating on the fire. Getting water on the fire is one of the most important actions in the race toward reaching our tactical priorities of Rescue, Extinguishment, and Property Conservation.



COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

SURVIVING AS THE BOSS... TIPS FOR THE COMPANY OFFICER

Alan Brunacini, Chief - Phoenix Fire Department

The only thing a boss can really control is their own behavior; stuff like the following can produce smarter, long-term outcomes:

CONTROL YOURSELF

Having and using power feels good—every boss must figure out their own angels & demons and then evaluate and manage the effectiveness of each; we must unleash the angels and lock up the demons...*always remember that egos eat brains.*

DON'T TAKE STUFF PERSONALLY

Bosses become the recipient of lots of negative stuff doing their job...that's why they call it a job; they also can get a lot of smoke blown up their gazoo; learn to deal with both—*don't let the negative hurt your feelings (big deal) and don't let flattery go higher than your heart.*

PLAY YOUR POSITION

Personal and positional competence becomes the basis of a boss's power—such capability is the foundation of the positive relationships that are required for boss effectiveness...

skip all the fancy footwork, just do the job they pay you to do (*and do it well*).

REALIZE YOU GET WHAT YOU GIVE

- The boss must realize that how they behave is a boomerang...anything they give comes back to them (positive or negative); the problem is the negative comes back lots quicker than the positive.
- If the boss hoards their power, it gets smaller—if they make the workers more powerful, the boss gets more powerful—if you want it, give it away.

THE MORE YOU USE IT, THE LESS YOU HAVE IT

- Effective power is generally very “quiet.”
- Be very careful of using the “noisy” stuff very much.
- There are some situations where the boss must beat their chest to get everyone's attention—these situations should mostly revolve

around welfare issues that are not self serving for the boss.

- Many times the efforts of the best bosses are personally transparent, but their efforts have a huge impact on organizational effectiveness because they set empowered workers up for success and direct credit toward those workers...*a lot happens when it doesn't matter who gets the credit.*

THE BOSS MUST GO FIRST

This is the responsibility that comes with being boss.

- You must be trustworthy to be trusted;
- Loyal to receive loyalty;
- Nice to be treated nicely;

The light shines from above and this is what being boss is about.

BE NICE WHEN YOU DON'T GET YOUR WAY

- This is boss show time; any idiot can be nice when they get their milk and cookies—the real test is

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CAN YOU SURVIVE?...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

In a testing exercise at Chesterfield County Fire and EMS in Virginia, 17 firefighters went through a scenario where they were lost in a burning building with a limited air supply and zero visibility.

"While you could debate the pros and cons of each, some of the actions of our participants were pretty interesting to watch," said Capt. Dave Daniels, the department safety officer. "All of the facilitators learned a great deal just observing the various behaviors."

The exercise was part of a test for promotion to lieutenant. For the past several years, the assessors have been putting the candidates through different scenarios where they have to think and perform at the same time, instead of just having them answer questions, Daniels said.

The participants knew nothing in advance about the scenario or location. "They didn't know anything other than it's something involving my turnout gear," Daniels said. The firefighters had an average of 10 years of experience.

The candidates were taken to an unfamiliar building and were dressed in full PPE, with the nomex hood on backwards to cover the face piece, and an SCBA with 700 psi remaining. "Most all inspected their SCBA pretty thoroughly and picked up on [the low air supply], but they didn't know if that was part of the assessment," Daniels said.

They also received the following information:

"You are the OIC of the first engine operating at a fire in a Shopping Mall. You and your crew are stretching a 1 3/4" hand line at the top of the escalator on the second floor and you encounter "cold" smoke and zero visibility. While maintaining voice contact with your crew, you begin searching for the fire. You no longer have voice contact with your crew and are now lost and disoriented. This is not a training scenario, your life depends upon your actions!"

One at a time, the candidates were then taken to the same place inside the building, walked in circles to get them disoriented, and assisted to the floor. "That's where the scenario began," Daniels said. "Then, they were on their own to use their own training and experience." They had only their handheld radio, and now 650 pounds of air left.

This took place at a warehouse type structure about a mile from the department's training facility. It was about 80 ft. by 120 ft. with an open floor plan. "The doors were locked and blocked so even if they found one, they couldn't use it to get out," Daniels said.

In addition, Command initially ignored transmissions from participants calling on the handheld radio, and told them to stand by or walked over their transmissions with conversation directed at the radio room, Daniels said.

The intent of this was to prompt the lost firefighters to use the emergency button on the handheld radio and announce "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY, EMERGENCY TRAFFIC."

This is what happened, in the words of Safety Officer Dave Daniels:

- The first firefighter removed items from his pockets and threw them different directions while listening for the object to strike a wall. This in theory would allow him to identify the direction of the closest wall. However, being in the center of the building, none struck a wall.

BOSS TIPS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

- how you act when the pain and poop gets on you.
- When you don't get your way use the relationship process to go on—avoid the use of pure power to exert yourself.
- Tough times are the only place we can build authentic organizational TRUST.

PLAY FAIR

- Be very careful of situations that produce winners and losers.
- It's organizationally (and personally) dangerous to have people in the system who have lost support, prestige, favor, decisions or face.
- Always remember: losers get even.

PRACTICE FORGIVENESS

- Fix mistakes, help the participants to recover, then move on.
- Use the past creatively:
 - develop the culture,
 - celebrate other wins,
 - learn from your screw ups.
- Don't live in the past...yesterday ended last night.
- Trust everybody...but, cut the cards.

DON'T DO ANYTHING THAT FEELS GOOD WHEN YOU ARE MAD, FRUSTRATED, OR HURT...

ENOUGH SAID

For more tips from Chief Brunacini visit:
www.firetimes.com



COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

BOSS POWER GOOFS

Alan Brunacini, Chief — Phoenix Fire Department

- being a bully... covert to mean spirited
- kiss up/kick down
- the threat of talented subordinates
- “front and centeritus” ... limelight lover
- yelling, abusive language
- withholding things we need
- making the problem, event or issue come up to their level of importance
- status seeking (letters behind their name, picture/name on everything, preoccupation with titles, etc.)
- regarding everyone as a rival... excessive competitiveness
- making the job (and themselves) bigger than it is
- exerting themselves at the wrong time (hitting the “easy ones”)
- the mismanagement of credit
- the assault, murder and kidnapping of ideas
- preoccupation with appearance
- playing someone else’s role
- the uncontrollable urge to “fix,” change, or make cosmetic changes to put their “fingerprint” on subordinate’s work (pissing on the bushes)
- strategically creating problems so they can solve them
- the inability to accept yes or nice
- creating a reward for others to (competitively) bring news (to them - the boss) before anyone else gets that news (reporting race)
- giving inordinate credit to those who shower attention, flattery on them (ass kissing)
- using their position to always put subordinates (and others) at a disadvantage
- acting in a way to always show others that they are in charge
- revenge - using power to pay people back for something that happened in the past
- must be the author of every good idea
- confusing monologue (lecturing) with dialogue (conversing)
- playing information games
- irritating people (because they can)
- keeping secrets/keeping others in suspense
- double standards
- overcomplicating a simple process
- creating win/lose situations
- creating (and patrolling) overdefined organizational levels
- thinking the rules don’t apply to them
- forgetting they have a boss
- harassment, hazing, excessive rites of passage
- excessive focus on detail - micromanagement
- continually bringing up past mistakes to put others at a disadvantage

VISIT CHIEF BRUNACINI'S WEB SITE — <http://www.firetimes.com>



COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

SAFETY AND THE COMPANY OFFICER

Dennis Compton, Fire Chief (ret.) - Mesa, AZ, Fire Department

TIPS TO DEVELOP A COMPANY LEVEL SAFETY ATTITUDE

- Each member of the company should be encouraged to be a team player and be held accountable for his or her actions.
- Company officers should be attentive at all times. They must stay alert and try to see the big picture at emergency scenes to enhance overall scene safety.
- Be calm and consistent with safety matters in the company. Be willing to correct behavior or performance when necessary.
- Be flexible and adaptable. This helps the company officer stay open minded and helps them accept changes in safety procedures and regulations. They must be able to be a coach and a safety salesperson.
- An overall "Positive" work environment can help create a "safe" work environment.
- Company officers must do their part to create trust within the company.
- Training exercises and emergency incidents should be critiqued. Part of the critique should include a review of safety hazards, problems, good solutions, and any other pertinent situations that may have occurred.
- Certain safety responsibilities can be pre-assigned and delegated within the company.
- Company officers should be careful not to overwork a crew. Rehab should be an important part of the overall work process.
- Make sure that company members are aware of safety policies and procedures and that your expectations are in concert with them. This should be done up front to minimize confusion and improve performance. This includes driving, use of equipment, and all other aspects of safety.
- Know the strengths and limitations of crew members. To the extent possible, this should include new firefighters and firefighters temporarily assigned to the company.
- Remember that company officers lead primarily by example. Safety behaviors are just one of the many areas where this applies.
- Company officers should not compromise safety. There should be a line drawn somewhere when it comes to safety issues. Safety is a good thing to stand for.
- Company officers should be advocates of total wellness. This includes medical, physical, emotional and psychological elements.
- Training creates habits, so companies should train consistent with the way they want to perform in real situations.
- Using case studies of actual incidents can be excellent tools for safety training within fire companies.
- Positive reinforcement and recognition are powerful motivators and can be effective in improving safety practices.



COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

Staying a Positive & Productive Company Officer

Dennis Compton, Fire Chief (ret.) - Mesa, AZ, Fire Department

We begin our fire service careers with a fire burning in our bellies and the intent of being around for a long time. The challenges of day-to-day life at home and at work confront all of us and sometimes make it difficult to keep that fire from dimming over the years.

We've all known company officers with a lot of seniority who are as positive and fulfilled as they were in the very beginning of their careers ... and we've seen situations in which company officers (new and old) were not. They may be unhappy with the work they're doing, the changes in the job since they started, unhappy with their departments, their bosses, and sometimes even their friends and family.

The demeanor of the company officer and his or her outlook on things in general has a tremendous impact on crew members and service delivery. Working for a specific company officer can be the best or, worst thing that can happen in a member's career ... and the impact can be long lasting.

TEAMWORK IN THE FIREHOUSE

Hundreds of officers from different parts of the country have provided me with suggestions for helping other officers remain positive, productive examples for others to model. The following represents their collective thoughts:

Company officers should strive to approach their duties with the same "teamwork-based" attitude that they naturally utilized in the beginning of their careers. Maintaining a sense of self-motivation that is directed towards competence, safety, learning, teaching and overall wellness is an important part of that process.

As long as we're active, we should remain students of the fire service. This could include attending a seminar periodically, taking structured classes, sharing information with crew members, transferring experience through storytelling and/or providing opportunities for others to learn and grow professionally.

Trying to be consistent and predictable helps others interact with the officer and helps the officer maintain his or her sense of direction as a supervisor. Being as fair as possible, avoiding the appearance of favoritism, displaying trust in crew members, being honest in our interactions with others and simply being nice to the people we encounter can also act as daily "booster shots" to a company officer's sense of self-worth and value thus affecting his or her demeanor in a positive way.

Being a good coach and working on our communications skills can help avoid personnel issues that can begin to get us down. Confronting issues in a productive way is preferred rather than letting them fester until emotions get the best of us ... sometimes resulting in negative, long-lasting reactions from those who were involved.

- As much as possible, company officers should stay focused on the mission, committed to service delivery, and concerned about the welfare of their crew members. Supporting the organization, buying into the future and setting a positive example can be contagious for crew members when modeled by the company officer.
- Approaching each emergency call with the eagerness and, empathy that we displayed early in our careers can

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COMPANY OFFICER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

help keep spirits, high. Encouraging participation and input from crew members in all non-emergency and support programs at the station helps the company officer create an environment in which the work is taken seriously and the workers are able to have fun doing it. A positive work environment creates positive, productive people - including the company officer.

Although it is difficult, bad things that happen at home should not dominate the work environment at the fire station and difficult times at work should not be allowed to create barriers to family relationships at home. That concept is a lot easier to write than it is to do, but officers that at least consider it periodically will probably manage this balance better than those who pay it no mind at all.

STAYING THE COURSE

This article was written to address company officer leadership, but the thoughts expressed can be applied across the board to all of us. We are all subject to up and down cycles at work and at home.

A valid question is, "Are there specific, realistic behaviors and concepts that we can practice to help us stay positive, productive and healthy contributors for the entire duration of our careers?" I know many company officers who do this very well and have been a great influence on the careers of others. They have found a way to keep their fires lit, which can sustain or reignite the fire in others. We all know that this can have a positive effect on service delivery in the streets and on internal relations, as well.

We're going to be here for a long time; we may as well enjoy ourselves and help those around us do the same. This is as important at the company-officer level as it is anywhere in the organization.

Listed below are a few of the behaviors that are consistently mentioned when we discuss the subject of company officer leadership in the fire service. This list is not intended to be all inclusive, but these behaviors were consistently repeated when discussing leadership in the areas of safety, self-discipline, empowerment, and staying a positive, productive and healthy leader throughout a career. I have added a couple of additional thoughts to them, as well. They are as follows:

- Always set a positive example and practice sound personal and professional values.
- Share our expectations of others up front and encourage members to get involved in their department's issues and processes.

- Good behavior and performance should be rewarded in some way at every opportunity; it should not be taken for granted. Unsatisfactory performance or behavior should never be rewarded; if it is, expect to see it repeated.
- Consistent with our long-standing fire service tradition, company officers should be customer focused (externally and internally) and community/neighborhood centered.
- Stay an advocate of the fire department and help other members be successful - including your boss.
- Remain competent in our jobs and value composure as a critical trait of an officer. Help the crews stay trained and help each member grow professionally.
- Display a high regard for personnel safety, including physical, psychological and emotional fitness.
- Practice self-discipline and expect the same from others. Be willing and able to impose corrective discipline when necessary.
- Remember the "5 L's": Never stop Learning. Love your friends and family. Believe in Laboring hard. Laugh often. Know when it's time to Leave.

An old friend shared the 5 Ls with me years ago. They are good for the soul and can help focus and balance leaders.

- As a company officer, decide what you would like others to say is special about working for you, then do a set of things to make it reality. It helps to know what we stand for as a leader...but we should probably keep the list short.

There is nothing more to our mission than providing leadership and support to the members who perform the mission every day. Company officers play a key leadership role in this process as a conduit that connects the support to the street...and thus to service.

I don't know anyone capable of meeting everyone's expectations and needs every day, but the more thought we give to these basic leadership concepts, the closer we will come to that target. Good luck to all of you as we continue to ponder leadership and its relationship to external and internal service delivery. It's all connected to the overall cause. We are very fortunate to have so many capable company officers in our systems.

Reprinted with permission - Firehouse Magazine, March 1999.



VINCE LOMBARDI'S COMPANY OFFICER LEADERSHIP TIPS

Ronald Richards, Chief - Browndale, PA, Fire Company

In 1958 the Green Bay Packers were losers. Vince Lombardi agreed to take over the team for the 1959 season. Vince held the first of his notoriously intense training camps to gear up for the season. Vince took over the reigns of the flounder team with high expectations.

He asked for obedience, dedication and 110% effort from each man, but he also made a promise to them: if they obeyed his rules and used his method, they would be a championship team. Three years later, that promise became a reality. At Lambeau Field in Green Bay on December 31, 1961, Vince watched proudly as the Packers defeated the New York Giants 37-0 for the National Football League championship.

In 1967, after nine phenomenal winning seasons with the Packers, Vince decided to retire as head coach. The Packers had dominated professional football under his direction, collecting six division titles, five NFL championships, two Super Bowls (I and II) and acquiring a record of 98-30-4. They had become the stick by which all other teams were measured. Coach Lombardi said, "Football is like life — it requires perserverence, self-denial, hard work, sacrifice, dedication and respect for authority."

Vince took a rag-tag, leaderless, group of individuals and molded them into a winning team. Does that sound like your fire company? A lot of strong guys and gals, all with competing egos who often put "I" before "team." Strong as individuals, but weak as a team.

Lombardi was more than a coach. Despite his ability to turn around the Wisconsin-based team, Vince was respected by his players and peers as a leader, a teacher, a visionary and motivator.

HERE'S SOME LEADERSHIP TIPS FROM COACH LOMBARDI:

Commitment

- The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.
- Once a man has made a commitment to a way of life, he puts the greatest strength in the world behind him.

It's something we call heart power. Once a man has made this commitment, nothing will stop him short of success.

- Unless a man believes in himself and makes a total commitment to his career and puts everything he has into it—his mind, his body, his heart—what's life worth to him?

Winning

- Success demands singleness of purpose.
- Some of us will do our jobs well and some will not, but we will be judged by only one thing—the result.
- Winning is not a sometime thing: it's an all the time thing. You don't win once in a while; you don't do the right thing once in a while; you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.
- Winning isn't everything—but wanting to win is.
- It's easy to have faith in yourself and have discipline when you're a winner, when you're number one. What you've got to have is faith and discipline when you're not yet a winner.
- I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is the moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle—victorious.

Discipline

- I've never known a man worth his salt who in the long run, deep down in his heart, didn't appreciate the grind, the discipline. There is something good in men that really yearns for discipline.
- The good Lord gave you a body that can stand most anything. It's your mind you have to convince.
- Mental toughness is many things and rather difficult to explain. Its qualities are sacrifice and self-denial. Also, most importantly, it is combined with a perfectly disciplined will that refuses to give in. It's a state of mind—you could call it character in action.

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Belief

- Confidence is contagious and so is lack of confidence, and a customer will recognize both.
- If you believe in yourself and have the courage, the determination, the dedication, the competitive drive and if you are willing to sacrifice the little things in life and pay the price for the things that are worthwhile, it can be done.

Leadership

- Leadership rests not only upon ability, not only upon capacity; having the capacity to lead is not enough. The leader must be willing to use it. His leadership is then based on truth and character. There must be truth in the purpose and willpower in the character.
- Leadership is based on a spiritual quality; the power to inspire, the power to inspire others to follow.
- A leader must identify himself with the group, must back up the group, even at the risk of displeasing superiors. He must believe that the group wants from him a sense of approval. If this feeling prevails, production, discipline, morale will be high, and in return, you can demand the cooperation to promote the goals of the company.
- Leaders are made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price which all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile.
- Once you learn to quit, it becomes a habit.

Sacrifice

- To achieve success, whatever the job we have, we must pay a price.
- Success is like anything worthwhile. It has a price. You have to pay the price to win and you have to pay the price to get to the point where success is possible. Most important, you must pay the price to stay there.
- Once you agree upon the price you and your family must pay for success, it enables you to ignore the minor hurts, the opponent's pressure, and the temporary failures.

Preparation

- They call it coaching but it is teaching. You do not just tell them...you show them the reasons.
- The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender.

Character

- It is essential to understand that battles are primarily won in the hearts of men.
- In great attempts, it is glorious even to fail.
- They may not love you at the time, but they will later.

Mental Toughness

- There's only one way to succeed in anything, and that is to give it everything. I do, and I demand that my players do.
- If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you'll be fired with enthusiasm.
- Mental toughness is essential to success.
- You never win a game unless you beat the guy in front of you. The score on the board doesn't mean a thing. That's for the fans. You've got to win the war with the man in front of you. You've got to get your man.

Teamwork

- Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.
- Teams do not go physically flat, they go mentally stale.
- Teamwork is what the Green Bay Packers were all about. They didn't do it for individual glory. They did it because they loved one another...
- People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses, or the problems of modern society.
- The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.

Desire

- The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather in a lack of will.
- The spirit, the will to win and the will to excel—these are the things that endure and these are the qualities that are so much more important than any of the events that occasion them.
- It is essential to understand that battles are primarily won in the hearts of men. Men respond to leadership in a most remarkable way and once you have won his heart, he will follow you anywhere.
- A man can be as great as he wants to be. If you believe in yourself and have the courage, the determination, the dedication, the competitive drive and if you are willing to sacrifice the little things in life and pay the price for the things that are worthwhile, it can be done.
- If you'll not settle for anything less than your best, you will be amazed at what you can accomplish in your lives.
- It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up.

SOURCE: WWW.WITHTHECOMMAND.COM



COMPANY OFFICER LEADERSHIP TIPS

Steve Orusa, Deputy Chief — Waukegan, MI, Fire Department

Leadership takes courage. Doing what is right has to be its own reward.

Before you can successfully motivate and influence a team of people you must earn their respect and acceptance. Here's a few tips to get you started:

PREPARE YOUR COMPANY TO BE SUCCESSFUL

A safe and effective company must be the top priority of the company officer. Prepare your company to be successful or rescue them from their incompetencies. Conscious learning requires injury to one's self-esteem. You will not always be right and neither will they. Pride and vanity can be great obstacles to learning. The true test of leadership and your company's safety and effectiveness is how well they function in your absence. The safety and effectiveness buck stops at the feet of the company officer.

LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN

Listening is one of the most valuable things you can do for another person. Listen to your crew and you may be surprised at how smart they are. Listening allows you to pick up cues or clues that some problems may exist in your company. Those challenges can be addressed in the non-emergency environment and not effect your company's performance when it counts. Remember that sometimes experience teaches us too late. Listening empowers you to harness the creative resources of your crew. Instead of one team leader always thinking for the team it becomes the entire team thinking for itself. You do not

have to be the only problem-solver or decision-maker. Be the glue that holds all the pieces together. Leaders don't do everything.

HONOR YOUR PEOPLE Now

We need to start honoring each other right now, not when we're gone. As leaders, we must find ways to celebrate the great things our people do every time they do it. They are ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Let's not wait until a line-of-duty death or retirement party to honor our men and women.

Do WHAT IS RIGHT

Leadership takes courage. Doing what is right has to be its own reward. It is irresponsible to buffer someone from the logical consequences of their behavior. Don't let your need for acceptance interfere with your ability to manage a team. Do not expect applause or thank you cards...it comes with the territory. Success requires you to accept responsibility and accountability. A quality that all successful people have is they accept responsibility when "it hits the fan." Have the courage to change and remember where you came from. You're never going to make everybody happy but always remember there are more good guys than bad ones.

Don't let your need for acceptance interfere with your ability to manage a team.

Source: IADRS News

FIRE RESCUE INTERACTIVE

VOLUME 9 ♦ ISSUE 8



AUGUST 2005

THE FIREGROUND OFFICER

THE VIEW FROM THE FRONT SEAT

Bob Pressler, Lieutenant (retired) — FDNY

After an uneventful day tour, the fire station had quieted down for the night. The house chores had been completed and the apparatus had been refueled after a day of in-service inspections. All hands were busy preparing the night meal.

Just before "Chow's on!" echoes through the station, the alert tone sounds and the printer springs to life. "Both companies first due" reports the house watch. The members scramble for the rigs as the house watch gives the rest of the information: "Across from 545 Ninth Street — a house fire."

As the officer on the first-due engine, what should be going through your mind when you leave the station? Proper size-up starts by knowing your district. It may be impossible to know every building in your

district, but it's possible to know the general areas where you respond. It's common for like-type occupancies to be clustered together. Commercial buildings may be located on or near the main streets of your area. Apartment buildings may also be found closer to your downtown, but garden apartments and townhouse complexes may be scattered throughout your district. Housing developments usually will contain houses of similar style with some varieties in floor plans.

None of the above are hard and fast rules, but they may provide you with some information to start planning.

The tactics that you employ on arrival will be based on what is showing. Conditions may range from "nothing

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showing" to "fully involved" and everything in between. Options for the first-arriving engine will range from not stretching a hand line to starting off with a master-stream appliance. Department SOPs may influence or limit the options the company officer may take, but they should be written as not to limit the input of the first-to-arrive officer.

LOOK OUT BELOW

As you respond, you should be monitoring the radio for any additional information that the dispatch center may have received. If there's no additional information, slow down and use the approach to the address to check for any smoke or civilians who may be waving you in. With nothing visible and no indications of a fire, what are your options?

As you approach the scene, take a good look at the fire building. Check doors, windows and the eaves, and don't forget a look over the roofline toward the rear. If nothing is visible, a look at the interior is required. If something is showing, you have several options. A good practice is to pull the engine past the address where the reported incident is. This leaves the front of the building for the truck company and it gives the officer and crew a look at three sides of the occupancy.

The company officer should be looking for several things on arrival. The five-point BELOW size-up is often the easiest for company officers to manage:

- B** fire building and type of construction;
- E** extent and location of the fire;
- L** life hazard, both reported or expected;
- O** occupancy of the fire building; and
- W** water supply.

Although all these points are important for the engine officer, the main task of the engine is to get first water on the fire. The other items are all important and will figure into the size-up, but the engine company officer cannot lose sight of this number-one objective. Of course, if an obvious life hazard needs immediate attention, the engine company might need to address that issue first, but the proper stretching of the first hand line has saved more lives and operations than other actions on the fireground.

One thing to always consider is your department's SOPs. Some departments still require the first engine to lay in a supply line on every phone alarm; others leave it as an option for the officer. For water supply, an engine company will normally have the following options: tank water, hydrant water, drafting and/or tanker water, or tanker shuttles.



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SOLUTION MAY BE PROBLEM

If your department is like most, the first attack line is usually a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch preconnect. The American fire service has embraced the 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hand line as the solution to almost all fire situations. But depending on nozzles, hose and pump pressures, the 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch actually may be getting your department into trouble.

A preconnect limits the options available for water supply, because it means the engine is now committed. It can't move from its present location without disconnecting the hand lines stretched from it. The operator must either hand stretch a supply line to the nearest hydrant or ask the next-due engine to bring water. If the hydrant is close or if the next engine's arrival is delayed, hand stretching to the hydrant is the best option.

If the distance is more than a few lengths and the next-due engine should be on scene shortly, that engine should be tasked with supplying the first-due engine. They have the option of laying in to the first engine and just using hydrant pressure, or they can stretch from the first engine to the hydrant and either supply them or hook directly to the hydrant. With light smoke conditions, a small fire building and crews already in the building, all of these options are likely to be acceptable.

While the water supply is established, the engine should be operating off booster-tank water. How big is your tank and how long will it last with a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch line flowing? How about a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch line? A good engine chauffeur will be able to give the interior crew water from the tank, hand stretch or hook up a supply line, establish a water supply, and keep the boss informed of the status of the supply. Once the water supply is established and the interior crew has been informed that they're no longer working off tank water, a good operator will make sure that the booster tank is topped off and ready in case of an emergency.

The 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch is acceptable for this scenario if the conditions on arrival don't indicate a serious fire. What fire conditions are compatible with the use of 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hand lines? What flows should you expect or need out of your 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch?

The use of a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch line also should be based on the experience and aggressiveness of the engine crew — both officer and firefighters. This size hand line should be used where the expected fire flow, in this case around 175 gpm, is compatible with fire conditions and personnel, and where maneuverability is also a concern. Unless the fire has complete control of an entire floor or unit, fires in houses, townhouses or apartment buildings are all within

the scope of a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch line. This remains true as long as the hand line is flowing the proper amount of water and the engine company is aggressive enough to advance the line into the fire area.

THE ADULTS SIZE-UP

When is a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch line not acceptable? In several instances, the engine company officer should seriously consider stretching a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hand line or using a master stream as initial attack. Many officers use the acronym ADULTS as a guide:

A is for an advanced fire condition

An advanced fire condition should always be considered for a large-flow attack, regardless of the fire building. This is especially true in wood-frame buildings, where the longer the fire burns the greater the chance of structural failure. When fighting fires in wood-frame buildings, it's always wise to try to stop the fire's growth or break even as soon as you can after arrival.

D is for any defensive operation

If you've given up on the offensive attack and have gone to a defensive operation, shut down all the smaller hand lines and combine those into larger streams. Again, it's about reach, volume and penetration. Big lines just have more of those three items.

U is for unable to determine the fire area

This is probably one of the most common mistakes committed on the fireground. Companies pull up to a commercial building with heavy smoke showing but no visible fire. Because the fire location and severity are unknown, firefighters rely on the standard "preconnect" mentality and stretch a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch line to the front of the building.

As the doors are forced and ventilation commences, they realize that there's a serious fire somewhere inside the building. Is it a fire in a storage room, or is a delivery truck inside at the rear of the building? Is it a fire in a paint spray booth or a pile of plastic pallets?

One possible clue is the smell of the smoke. Paper smells different than plastic. A truck burning inside a building smells different than a cockloft fire. Although it may not tell you how much fire you have, it might tell you what's burning. The bottom line is if you don't know what's burning in a large-area building, stretch a hand line that will not only give you greater reach and flows, but

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FROM THE FRONT SEAT...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

also will offer the crew some degree of protection. If it takes two engines to get one line in service, then assign two engines to the task.

L is for large, uncompartimented areas

These include bowling alleys, supermarkets, factories or any other facility where the total floor area or parts of the floor area will lead to a fire load that may be more than the 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch line can handle. Supermarkets may have sales areas that are 100 by 75 feet, all undivided. Big fire areas require big water to offset the heat release.

Fighting fires today is about overcoming the tremendous heat release from all the plastics that are used. Look at an older 1,200- to 1,300-square-foot ranch-style home. Room sizes will vary from a 12- by 16-foot bedroom to maybe a 20- by 25-foot living room/dining room combination. Even if these areas are heavily involved, a good engine crew can handle this fire with the 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hand line. But in a newer 7,000- to 8,000-square-foot home, room sizes start at 20 by 25 feet, and the family room (complete with home movie theater) measures 2,000 square feet. These "great rooms," as they're now called, have fuel loads that may match that of a small commercial building.

T is for tons of water

This is a catch-all category. It covers large flows of water for any reason. For heavily involved entire buildings, water curtains or even flowing water to disperse a vapor cloud, the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch should be chosen over the 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch.

S is for standpipe operations

This is another area where the American fire service has a problem. Time after time, we read about companies that couldn't make the fire floor because of insufficient flows. Fire officers need to understand the requirements for sup-

A good engine chauffeur will be able to give the interior crew water from the tank, hand stretch or hook up a supply line, establish a water supply, and keep the boss informed of the status of the supply.

plying water through a standpipe system as well as the fire load that might be encountered. High-rises have open floor plans so that the entire floor becomes one large fire area. What flows and reach will be needed to overcome that fire load?

A 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hand line, three lengths, equipped with a 1-inch tip, will flow more than 225 gpm at an outlet pressure between 65 and 75 pounds. A 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch line with an automatic nozzle that requires 100 psi at the tip for maximum efficiency will require at least 160 psi at the outlet to flow approximately 175 gpm. Less flow, less reach and penetration, less protection, less heat absorption — and all at greater pressures. If the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch is hard to manage, join companies together to stretch and operate the line.

If your district has buildings with standpipe systems, find one where you can charge and pump the system to get a benchmark for engine pressures and flows. Take three lengths of hose and different nozzles and go to the roof and the uppermost system outlet. Charge the system and flow the different hose/nozzle combinations to find the maximum fire flow that your first-alarm assignment can put in service.

The engine company's job on the fireground might seem simple: Just put water on the fire. But the variables and unknowns can make this a very difficult task. It's our job, through training, to try to overcome these obstacles. Become proficient in all aspects of engine work and be prepared for the unknown. Know your nozzles and hose loads; know the flows that each "system" will give you; and above all, never underestimate your opponent.

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FIRE RESCUE INTERACTIVE

VOLUME 10 ♦ ISSUE 4



APRIL 2006

COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

THE COMPANY OFFICER

Rick Lasky, Chief - Lewisville, TX, Fire Department

For years it's been said that when you take an honest look at how it all works and how it all really gets done, the following is more than obvious. First, our most important asset is our firefighters. Second, our battalion chiefs or shift commanders are the coaches. Third, it is the company officer, that lieutenant, sergeant, captain or whatever you call them, that gets things done and sets the tempo for the shift. As a chief officer you know that if you want to get things done you have to get to the company officer. This is definitely true and obvious when everything is going good, but (and I know there's always a but...) it's also true and accurate when things are not going good. It all comes down to leadership and the company officer's ability to lead his or her troops in a good direction.

But that also means taking on responsibility. Responsibility for yourself and your actions and for those you are going to lead.

The fire service has always been an extremely proud profession. But over the past so many years, we've seen this begin to slip, and in some cases begin to erode. Today we hear some of our officers and firefighters saying things like, "why don't these guys care? They don't care about how the firehouse looks. They don't care about their uniforms. They don't take care of the rig. And they don't care about the job." And often they say, "There's nothing you can do about it. It's that damn generation X or Y. You know, the dot COM firefighters." You hear them blame their parents. And that's partially true. But isn't it

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time that we sit them down and tell them how it is in our world. I guess my question is, where did all of the mentors go? Where are the company officers? Where are the guys that have all of the information and experience that's needed to teach the new firefighters how to be a firefighter? How to survive both in and out of the firehouse. The stuff they need to know, should know, and have to know. Aren't we a little responsible? You're out there. Guys, you need to share the wealth. Share your knowledge. You used to do it. We need to get these guys with the experience to give before they leave, because once they leave, they're gone. And all of that experience and knowledge is gone with them. Once they walk out the door, it's gone forever. Don't let those guys waste everything that they worked for and sacrificed for. Sit them down with the new guys and get them to give it to them. This again is the time you hear them say that "they won't listen." I know it's difficult but you

need to make them listen. This is our chance.

WE USE TO GIVE ORDERS.

We use to sit the new guy down and explain what was expected of him or her. The way we want it. The way the guys before us wanted it. I can remember being sat down on my first day on the job by my lieutenant Bill Allen while he explained why we take care of the rigs, our tools, our firehouse and more importantly, each other. He explained what was expected of me and I was sure he was going to make sure that I met those expectations. He explained what we were all about and that the public didn't owe us anything, that in fact we owed them for giving us the opportunity to work in the best profession in the world. And he said to never allow anyone to disrespect the job or each other. Pretty simple stuff when you think about it. We do have a choice in this. Tell them why this job is the best job in the world and why we do what we do. Share with them the

history, both the good and the bad. Tell them where it all started. Several years ago at FDIC in Indy, I heard someone say, "What's with the old guy?" and they pointed on stage to Ben Franklin. Talk about missing history. Tell them why fire engines are red and that the color red in the fire service stands for courage and valor. Where the pike poles came from and that they were whaling hooks used in Jamestown to pull down the shacks on each side of the burning one all in an effort to keep the fire from communicating to the other structures. They were even in to exposure control back then. Where the Maltese Cross came from and what it stands for. If you don't tell them, how can you expect them to take care of them? How can you expect them to understand and truly appreciate it all? And the list goes on. Make them listen. Remind them that it's a privilege to be a firefighter. That we owe the public a service. That it's an honor to be part of this family and how great it really is. And if they don't like it, show them



FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING NETWORK

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ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

It's not hard! Type it, hand write it, send it in on a tape, video tape a session, or however else you feel comfortable sharing ideas that will make the job easier. We're all here to do the best we can and by sharing information we all stand a better chance at being successful the next time out.

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the door. Because if they don't have the passion now, we'll lose for sure down the road. They'll become the 5 percenters that don't give a damn.

SHARE THE HISTORY.

If we don't share the history with them now and they don't understand or appreciate it, what's it going to be like in 20 or 30 years? All of it will be gone. Everything will be wasted. We may as well throw all the uniforms out and wear nametags that say, "Hi my name is Chip." There are people out there right now that don't have a clue where their collar insignias came from and what they stand for. Where the speaking trumpets came from. Tell them. Tell them where it all started. Go back and review the fires that occurred in our country and discuss the impact they had on the fire service as it is today. Explain to them where it all started with your department. Tell them about your department's history, who was there before you and what kind of an impact they had and where it needs to go now. If you don't know, find out! This is our chance. Set the tempo right from the start. Pull them into the circle now and then they can begin to appreciate how great this profession really is.

BRING BACK THE MENTORS AND TRAIN.

Start a mentoring program. And take the time to let your firefighters know what the expectations are of them. It's a little hard to get on a guy later when you didn't give him the game plan up front. We're killing over a hundred firefighters each year and injuring tens of thousands. And all with better apparatus, better gear, and better tools. There's no new fire out there killing us. It's the same stuff that's been killing us for years. And while we're on the subject of losing firefighters. Teach them firefighter survival training. Teach them how to survive and go back home. How to get themselves out of trouble. Don't let anyone bully you into thinking you'll hurt your guys teaching them how to survive. Train safe, but train. Ya know I can hurt myself with a sledgehammer if I tried hard enough. We train our people to work with saws that travel at 6000 revolutions a minute, that's 250 miles per hour. To work with hydraulic tools that will lift a school bus off the ground. To crawl into burning buildings. It's a dangerous job, but when you freelance on the fireground you risk killing or injuring your firefighters and when you freelance on the training ground you risk doing the same thing. Train safely and as if your life depends on it, because it does! And to the guys that have the brass axes to train their people in firefighter survival techniques, keep going. Especially when they have little or no support from the administration. Keep fighting and

teaching your guys how to go home when things go wrong. About the only thing you're going to do wrong is save a firefighter's life. Spend some time with them.

FIGHT FOR NEW EQUIPMENT AND BE HONEST WITH WHAT'S KILLING US.

Remember one thing. When you're crawling down that dark, hot, smoky hallway, the air pack on your back, the nozzle in your hand, and the protective clothing you're wearing, all was bought at the lowest bid. How's that make you feel? When you start to look at the reasons for these deaths and the contributing factors, the same things keep reappearing. Lack of command and control, lack of an accountability system, poor communications, not following SOPs, failure to read the building and the fire properly and a long list of reasons showing us that we need to get back to the basics. And as I mentioned before and it is worth repeating, as one of my mentors said, "you want to be a good firefighter, you need to know building construction and fire behavior. You have to know how the building is going to react to the fire and how the fire is going to react to the building. You need this before the rest." On that same note, Frank Brannigan (keep in mind referring to Frank as an expert in building construction is an understatement!) has said for a long time that we often compare the "battleground" to the "fireground" which is a very true comparison. But that we differ from military strategists in the following way. They are often successful in their battles because they study their enemy. They learn everything about them. We don't. He reminds us that our enemy is "the building" and we just don't spend enough time studying OUR enemy, the building.

OUR LEADERSHIP.

As you continue to look, you see that our leadership or lack of leadership, often allowed for some of those things to happen. Often that problem starts back in the firehouse. If they're a bunch of mutts in the firehouse, they're gonna to be a bunch of mutts out there. There's no metamorphosis that occurs on the fireground. Those attitudes will carry right out of the firehouse and onto fireground. Another good friend of mine, FDNY Battalion Chief Don Hayde said, "Don't blame the guys in the company, blame the company officer. He's the one that allows it to happen. Go after him or her. Hold them accountable." And it's true. If we can't trust them in the firehouse we sure can't trust them on the fireground. I mentioned earlier, that the company officer sets the tempo and attitude for that particular firehouse and in reality can effect or influence that of the

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entire shift. We can all remember the good officers we worked for just like we can probably remember the good teachers we had in school and how they impacted our lives. How they made a difference. They were there for you when you needed them, they didn't leave you in times of crisis, and they understood you. At the firehouse we referred to them as working officers. They didn't mind getting dirty once in a while, helped you with projects and were really part of your crew. They didn't hole up in their office and keep distant from the crew. They were fair and honest and didn't pull any punches. They cared enough to spend the time and effort with you and wanted to see you succeed but most of all go home at the end of the day. We're losing too many very special people each year not to care. Not to try. Bottom line is, we do have a say. We can make it happen. We can provide the foundation for that pride and stimulate the attitude that is needed. Remember, the one thing in life you have absolute control over, is your attitude. Anger, happiness, sadness, they're all emotions. Once you give up your attitude, it's all over. It can take you years to recover.

YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE.

There's something out there called your circle of influence. It's that circle around you that if used properly can influence people to do the right things. If you lead by example and "walk the talk" if you will, you can pull people into your circle of influence. Be positive, say good things, be nice to your people, and watch it grow. The fence walkers will eventually fall in and the 5 percenters will go away. It can also work the other way with a bad attitude. When that happens you have to take immediate action and eliminate the source. As much as the company officer can have that positive effect in the firehouse or on their shift, it can be that same individual that is poisoning the water. The opposite of the positive company officer and role model is the one that sits at the kitchen table and holds court, tearing anything positive to shreds and destroying morale. The problem is, they usually blame someone else for the morale problem not realizing that they are at times one of the contributing factors to the whole thing. If you're trying to figure out where you fall, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I start the rumors or stop them?
- Do I try to exhibit a positive or bad attitude?
- Do the troops hang with me because I let them get away with murder or do they hang with me because they know I care and will protect them?

- Do I serve as the errand boy for the chief or do I stand up and explain that it's for a good reason and needs to be done?
- Am I part of the problem or part of the solution?
- And probably the most important one of all. Am I their leader or their buddy? I can be both, but I need to be a leader first. I don't want them to follow me just because I'm their bud, I want them to follow me because I'll keep them out of trouble (both on the fire-ground and in the firehouse), I care and will protect them and because I'm a damn good officer.

In the fire service we come up with solutions and get rid of the problems. Make it so and they end up on the outside looking in. In the words of the great Bob Uecker, "Boy it sure looks like they're having a good time in there." Start on the candidate's first day and continue to build the foundation for them. Insist that they appreciate this job. We owe it to those that have sacrificed before us. Those that worked so hard. It's our turn to take a crack at them. Don't let the old timers come back and say, "What the hell did you do to my department?"

LEARN TO MARKET YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Go out and show it off. Whether you're a career or volunteer firefighter, get out of the station. Or better yet, open it up. If your neighborhood will allow it, open the overhead doors once and a while and let the neighborhood see that the station is occupied. Let the guys sit in front of the firehouse in the evening. We put park benches in front of our firehouses. I want the guys sitting out in front. Let them connect with the families in the neighborhood. Let the kids see the fire trucks. Try to make the firehouse look like a firehouse again. This one is probably going to be hard to believe, but in Lewisville we actually had a "no loitering" rule here that stated that "personnel shall not congregate, loiter or otherwise meet in the rear or front of the station." Does that sound as ridiculous and just plain goofy to anyone else as it does to me? As long as they are not doing anything wrong, what's the big deal? A neighboring training chief said that I ruined what someone else spent sixteen years working so hard for by letting the guys sit in front of the firehouse in the evenings. I don't know how you can ruin something that ridiculous. I'll be happy to explain to anyone from the public why we do it! Get the guys out reading to the kids in the schools. Go out and find ways to market your fire department. See what others are doing and how it works. Go out and brag about your

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department and tell people why it's great. I walked into our Central Firehouse in Lewisville on my first day and didn't know whether to open up a checking account or buy insurance. All the desks and tables had glass on them. Who puts glass on furniture in a firehouse? Then I looked at the walls and said, "Where's all the fire stuff? Someone stole all the fire stuff off of the walls. They're all bare. We took care of that. There's "stuff" on the walls now! Often, if it looks like a firehouse, it is. There are a few that slip through, look good on the outside but pretty empty on the inside if you know what I'm saying. But we're the FIRE DEPARTMENT. Start acting like it. To those that say you have to be more like a "business" these days. You're right to an extent. You can still look like firefighters, your firehouse can still look like a firehouse, and your firefighters can still act like firefighters and still be professional.

THE BEST JOB IN THE WORLD.

This is the best job in the world. If you don't like it, GET OUT! For those that don't care about this job, that don't care about their brother or sister, that don't love it, send them a message. Tell them to go down the street and work for K-Mart stocking shelves. Then they can have a job that they don't have to think about when they go home.

In closing, I'm not much of a poet, but this one fits very well and I've

used it in the past many times. I got it from my friend Bill Farnum. It applies actually not just to the company officer, but also to all of us.

*"I saw some men in my home town,
I saw some men tearing a building down.
With a heave and a ho and a mighty yell,
I saw a beam swing and a sidewall fell.
I asked their foreman are these men skilled,
The kind that you'd hire if you wanted to build.
He laughed and said why no indeed,
For common labor is all I need.
For with common labor in a day or two,
I can tear down what took a builder 20 years to do.
I asked myself as I walk away,
Which of these roles am I going to play?"*

The message is, you can go out and be the best company officer you can. Study the position. Talk to those who are successful. Ask them how they make it all work. Constantly evaluate your performance and always try to improve yourself. Share your knowledge and experience. Be a brother. Love this job and be passionate about it. Share the information and continue to build this great profession of ours, OR, you can go out and tear it down. The choice is yours. For those that do care and truly love it. Keep working at it. Keep pushing forward. Go out and share it with somebody. Read something about this job everyday. You owe it to yourself and both of your families. If anything, do one small thing. Leave it a little bit better for the next guy.

Make a difference and stay safe.

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APPLICATION ON BACK...



FIREGROUND TRAINING

THE SECRET TO TRAINING FIREFIGHTERS

One of the first things that you need to do when you're planning a training session is to decide why you are doing the training. Is it to review skills that most should know? Is it to simply develop proficiency? Is it to introduce something new — equipment, technique, procedure? There needs to be a reason and the reason must have value to the students.

Next, figure out who will be participating in the training — is it the normal crew, is it new guys or guys not familiar with the material, is it a combination of the two? This is important because you'll need to make sure there is something in it for everyone.

Lastly, before you ever get started, make sure the material has *real value* — something that they can (and probably will) use during a response. So many training sessions and training start-ups fail because they're simply textbook-type training sessions that don't give the guys something that they could actually use on the street.

Training Sessions from a Firefighters Perspective

If you want guys to participate and get involved in the session then make sure there's something in it for everyone. Let's face it, some guys may need this particular training session and some may not. For the ones that do need it then make sure the material is designed for them to "get" it. For those that don't need it, or may simply benefit from a quick review, then make sure there's something else for them to learn. Maybe they'll learn they have a better grasp on the material than they thought. Maybe they'll learn that they need to review it a bit more than they thought. Sometimes what they learn may not be about the actual material, maybe they'll learn a little about teaching

the material to others by helping with the students (which actually helps them develop a better grasp on the material).

Most of us learn by doing, not by listening to others tell us how to do it. Keep that in mind all the time. If you have to present new information then, at the very least, try and make it interactive by keeping it short and asking questions to get them involved. Put yourself in their shoes, you probably wouldn't want to be there either so make sure you consider that when developing the material before you deliver it.

When we talk about passing things off, you really have to put together a core group of instructors that crosses the gamut of the people that you're going to train. The instructors have to be very knowledgeable in what they're doing to the point that they don't even appear to be doing it. That's the key to all of this right here. When you teach somebody, you have to get up in front, you have to pass it off, but you have to pass it off just like you're talking to the guys. And that's the key to it to make it successful.

In order to do that, you have to be well-versed in the skills yourself. You have to realize that there are multiple ways to get something done, and the successful way is actually the one that works for that individual. If you have a group of 20 standing in front of you, you may have to connect 20 individual times or 20 separate times for them to get the material that you're trying to get across, and it's your job as the person trying to pass it off to make that connection.

Spend a lot of time in the preparation mode. People don't think that you have to do this, but you have to spend

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as much time preparing the session as you will delivering the session. That's critical to success. Spend the time up front and plan for all of the problems. If you were taking the training, how would you criticize it? What would your complaints be? Address those as the person putting the package together.

Then, when you assemble your group, make sure that your group is able to hand that off and has your same philosophies. When you get to the actual training time, split up the group evenly, make sure that you have enough instructors for people going through it, and simply let them learn. This is the key right here- this is the big secret. Set the training session up to the point that there's no chance that they can't learn something. It doesn't really matter what it is at this point, because it will be something that they learn.

When you teach somebody, you have to show them, you have to let them try it, and then you have to let them build it into their instinct by doing it over and over again. Learning is really something that everybody wants to do, and everybody likes to do. It's simply a matter of taking the time to make the session a learning session - too many people fail to do that.

It's All About Learning!

If you reach into your pocket and pull out a \$5 bill then you'll be probably be happy because you had it in your pocket. If you were walking around the corner and found a \$5 bill on the ground you'd probably be much happier...because it was something you found and you never expected to find it. Make your training session like finding a \$5 bill. Make your training session a place where everybody who comes can actually learn something for them and they will come back and participate again with renewed energy.

Good Luck!

FIREGROUND SURVIVAL

Communications Strategies

Vincent Dunn, Deputy Chief (retired) — FDNY

In the fire service, there is a deadly misunderstanding about communications involving life-threatening situations that kills firefighters every year: Who is responsible for discovering and communicating these dangers during fire operations?

Firefighters believe this is the chief's responsibility, whereas chiefs believe the firefighter is responsible. Who is correct? As long as these two important sets of people on the fireground disagree on who is responsible for discovering and communicating the information about life-threatening situations—such as possible collapse, flashover, or explosion hazards—we never will reduce the number of firefighter deaths and injuries on the fireground.

How could such a deadly misunderstanding have arisen about this important life-saving procedure? I have a confession to make: Fire chiefs unwittingly create this deadly misunderstanding. Over the years, chiefs, including myself, have given the impression that we can detect or foresee all fireground hazards. Sometimes we can if we have studied firefighting strategy, tactics, and fireground safety. However, even with this knowledge, a chief may not discover and communicate most life-threatening dangers during a fire. In reality, firefighters are responsible for discovering and communicating fireground dangers.

Check out Chief Dunn's web site at

<http://www.vincentdunn.com>.



FIREGROUND LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP LESSONS

George Burk, Captain (retired) - USAF

"Take a string and push it. What happens? The string recoils. Now pull the string. What happens? The string goes in the direction it's being pulled. Leadership is like pulling a string. Leadership is pulling, not pushing!"

"Leadership is solving problems and the day your people stop bringing you their problems is the day you stop leading." - General Colin Powell

LEADERS ARE OUT FRONT

- Let them see your back (butt), not your face.
- "You can't lead without jumping into the water." - General George Patton
- Trust Your NCOs/Take Care of Your People.
- Take care of them; they'll take care of you.
- Trust is what you take into battle.
- They do it for the mission.
- They do it for their country.
- Above all, they do it for each other.
- Because...they trust their leaders.

MAKE LEADERS AROUND YOU

- Decide; Delegate; Disappear.
- Give them the tools they need.
- Be a mentor and coach.
- Have a vision for yourself and your troops.

SURPASS THE ORDINARY

- Have high standards and core values.
- Think 1-2 steps ahead of your boss or the situation.
- Become the benchmark.

TELL THE TRUTH

- A lie is far more painful and far more destructive.

BE CONSISTENT

- Make your actions mirror your words.
- Praise in public; constructively criticize in private.

- Make your professional and personal life seamless.

INTEGRITY

- What you do when no one's around or you think no one's watching.
- Keeping your word; honoring your agreements.
- Without integrity, a leader's "naked."
- "Live your life in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip." - Will Rogers

DON'T TRY TO BE SOMEONE YOU'RE NOT. BE YOURSELF

- Do what's right, not what's popular.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- People listen to you in the office.
- They watch what you do in the hallways and on board ship.
- Always on duty - 24/7, 365

HAVE THE COURAGE OF YOUR CONVICTIONS

- Character to think it out and the courage to act it out.
- "Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway." - John Wayne

"COURAGE IS DOING THE (RIGHT) THING THAT'S PROBABLY THE LAST THING YOU'D WANT TO DO."

- You may be cold but you must never act cold.
- You may be hungry, but you must never act hungry.
- You may be afraid, but you must never show fear.
- "Leaders are visionaries with a poorly developed sense of fear and no concept of the odds against them." - Robert Jarvik

Visit George's web site at: www.georgeburk.com.
For more of George's lessons visit <http://www.firenuggets.com>.



COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

12 GOOD HABITS FOR EFFECTIVE COMPANY OFFICERS

Steve Kidd - Orange County Fire/Rescue, Orlando, Florida

We've always heard the term "natural-born" leaders. I imagine folks began to call Dwight Eisenhower a natural born leader sometime between West Point and the White House. In the fire service, I've worked for some folks who had such smooth leadership skills they seemed natural, as if they'd used gold bugles as diaper pins. If you pay close attention to company officers you admire, you'll notice these leaders have one main thing in common—they're predictable, as if they've preplanned every move. In a sense, they have. Effective leaders, including the first-level officers, rely on habits developed through many means, including trial and error, observation and education. Below, I list examples of good habits, categorized by task that can make you a more effective company officer.

ADMINISTRATIVE HABITS

We'd all like to spend our time answering alarms, and then drinking coffee in the kitchen until the next call. As officers, however, if we don't perform the required administrative tasks, everything will fall apart. Below, I've outlined three habits for effectively managing your administrative responsibilities.

1. KEEP A PLANNING CALENDAR

Although you can't predict the next call or how many emergency activities will occur during your shift, you can use a calendar to plan a rough framework of your goals and activities for the upcoming month. I use the calendar program that came with my computer to list routine

We'd all like to spend our time answering alarms, and then drinking coffee in the kitchen until the next call. As officers, however, if we don't perform the required administrative tasks, everything will fall apart.

monthly duties, such as reports, fuel logs, major maintenance issues and training classes that my crew helps me plan. Solicit everyone's input when planning the next month's activities and you'll hear less griping when you call everyone to the drill floor.

2. FINISH PAPERWORK PROMPTLY

We all hate filling out mindless reports. There seems no end to all the paperwork required of us these days, even with computers in our so-called "paperless" society. Tackle this necessary evil first thing each morning—before you get busy with the day's activities. Having the chore behind you will put a nice spin on the rest of the day.

3. TAKE NOTES

You can easily become sidetracked during a busy shift. You might forget an important task, such as telling the oncoming officer about the minor problem with your apparatus. For that reason, I keep a notebook with me to log important items as the day goes by. I use my notebook to



record station maintenance requests, equipment maintenance, training plans and upcoming building surveys. This organizes everything in one place that I can turn to when asked a question.

LEADERSHIP HABITS

Interpersonal relationships change when you take on the company officer role. Going from the driver's seat to the officer's seat is a big step with plenty of responsibility. We all take this responsibility to heart and want to become effective leaders. How do we do this all in one day? We don't! Give yourself time. And most importantly, take the job—not yourself—seriously. Below, I list four habits of effective leaders.

1. BE PART OF THE CREW AND SHARE THE EXPERIENCE

Just because you're the boss, doesn't mean you're not part of the crew. In no other line of work (except possibly the Navy) does a boss have to discipline a subordinate, then eat dinner and sleep in the same room with that person that evening. You must strike a balance between being a leader and team member. You can do this through honesty and fairness. Avail yourself to everyone on your crew so they can share their ideas, suggestions and sometimes their problems. Make it a habit to eat with your crew, participate in daily exercise routines together and talk about something other than the fire department every now and then. Admit when you make mistakes and be yourself as much as you can—as long as that includes behaving in an exemplary manner.

2. SPEND TIME ON THE FLOOR

I've observed countless company officers place their equipment on the engine in the morning, then go inside to drink coffee and start their daily log while the rest of the crew checks the apparatus and equipment for the day. These officers miss the opportunity to play with the fire truck. Many people dream about working on or around a fire truck, but we have the honor of doing so each shift. Make a habit of walking around the unit each morning, opening compartments, looking at the hose, inspecting your SCBA and taking note of the general condition of everyone's personal protective equipment. Learn what tools each person on your crew carries in their pockets in case they have something you might need in a future emergency. And check your own equipment, methodically looking for any flaws that could cause you grief later in

the day. Take care of your equipment, and it won't let you down.

3. MEET EACH MORNING

Meet with your crew each morning after you've checked the equipment and readied it for service. You can conduct this meeting around the kitchen table over coffee or a light breakfast so everyone gets off on the same foot for the day. Read any memos that have appeared in your in-basket since your previous shift, set a tentative time for the day's drill and assign any other shift activities. Discuss current events that may affect your shift, including the day's weather prediction, traffic conditions and road construction in your area.

4. ADDRESS PROBLEMS PROMPTLY

In a perfect world, we'd never have personnel problems. However, most difficulties you encounter as a company officer involve interpersonal relations and start small. You can handle these issues easily if you address them before they fester into bigger beasts. Take care of personnel problems immediately, openly and honestly. Make it a habit to have individual conversations with your crew on a regular basis. Never look the other way when you see the potential for trouble. Looking away gives small problems an opportunity to grow into something that can get out of control.

TRAINING HABITS

Unfortunately, many company officers stop participating in daily training drills. Let's face it, how many times can we pull hose or throw ladders when it's easier to pop in a video, set the class on auto-pilot for an hour, then pencil whip the record to say we spent two hours on training for the day. Don't fall into that trap. Fighting fires, executing rescues and delivering EMS—all highly physical activities—require highly physical training. Skipping basic training drills and skimming over a subject without fully practicing the activities associated with it can prove deadly. Make it a habit to train every chance you get. Here, I list three habits for top-notch trainers.

1. SET TEAM GOALS

You can solicit full participation in your training activities by allowing everyone involved a voice in the plans. Set goals as a group and solicit ideas for drills from everyone on the crew. I use my monthly schedule as an opportu-

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12 HABITS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

nity to gather everyone together and hear their ideas and concerns about our training initiative each month.

2. DEMAND OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE

Make it a habit to do your best at the drill. Don't settle for the minimal standards for each activity because emergencies seldom require minimal performance. This usually necessitates repeating an activity several times to hone a skill. If you simply practice an activity once and then talk about all the flaws and go home, little is gained. Set everyone up for success by performing the skill again; the second time hold everyone to an optimal standard.

3. CRITIQUE YOUR ACTIONS

Whenever possible, make it a habit to critique your crew's performance before leaving emergency scenes. Solicit the team's opinions and perspectives on the event and each person's actions on the call. Performing the critiques while on scene—before "optimistic memory" takes over—gives you a more accurate perspective. You can conduct a more formal critique later, but the on-scene meeting often proves the most valuable. Take a moment to ask your crew if any of them sustained injuries. When the adrenaline's flowing, crew members often overlook cuts and scrapes.

COMMON HABITS

If there's ever a need for effective habits, it's while commanding an emergency scene. When stressed, everyone reverts to what they know, so try to make the right moves a matter of habit while training for emergencies. Well disciplined, effective company officers perform predictably on emergency scenes because they follow this principal. Below, I list two important habits for effective command.

1. TAKE A MOMENT TO UNDERSTAND THE SCOPE OF THE EMERGENCY

We've all heard of the candle-moth syndrome where a moth, attracted by bright, flickering light, flies directly into a flame. Unlike moths, experienced company officers take a moment to gather the facts before taking action on

You can't conduct an effective size-up while running, talking or picking up equipment. A few seconds spent with your eyes, ears and nose in gear can tell you volumes about what is really happening on the scene.

the fire scene. You can't conduct an effective size-up while running, talking or picking up equipment. A few seconds spent with your eyes, ears and nose in gear can tell you volumes about what is really happening on the scene. Every step closer to a burning building means you see less of the overall picture. Pause for a wide view of the whole building from top to bottom. When practical, make a quick trip to the rear of the structure to look for other problems or potential escape paths before committing to an interior attack. Read the situation well and you will give safer, more appropriate and much more effective orders.

2. MAKE DECISIONS

As the company officer, your crew expects you to make tough decisions. When facing a situation that requires decisive action, gather the facts, apply your knowledge and experience and make the best decision you can, even if that means doing nothing more than isolating the situation until proper help arrives. You can always defend a decision you've made, but you can never defend yourself if you fail to act.

This isn't a complete list of all the habits good company officers should adopt. Most draw on personal values, respect for the job and their crew, and good safety practices. We may not all be natural born leaders, but we can develop good leadership habits that help us get the most from ourselves and our crews. The most important thing to remember: Good habits allow you to present yourself as a good example for your crew, help keep everybody safe and lower your stress levels for years to come. Stay Safe.

Source: Fire Rescue Magazine, June 2001 — Reprinted with permission.

Training Saves Lives • Firefighters!

FIRE TRAINING



VOLUME 19 • ISSUE 12 • DECEMBER 2015

ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS

THE ENGINE COMPANY OFFICER

On arrival at an emergency scene, the engine company officer has a lot of things to manage and consider. The most important responsibility is the supervision and operation of your company throughout the fire, in addition to selection, placement, and operation of the fire-attack line.

While there are many more areas of responsibility on other responses and at the firehouse, the operation of the initial-attack line is one of the most dangerous and most important tasks the engine company will perform. This requires a tactically sound and proficient team of firefighters under the direction of a technically and tactically proficient company officer.

TRUST

Before the alarm sounds, trust should be established between the crew and the boss.

This doesn't happen overnight and sometimes takes a lot of time. If it's your first day working with a group of firefighters, then this is impossible to establish in one day.

Your reputation as a firefighter and company officer does precede you as you work with a crew. However, reputations can be a lot of rumor and false feather ruffling but do sometimes hold credibility. Along the same line as reputation are certifications and qualifications. Often these aren't worth the paper they are printed on if not achieved in hands-on tactical firefighting operations.

While training, education, and knowledge of our craft is extremely important, everyone, including the officer, must get dirty and master the hands-on portions of

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THE ENGINE OFFICER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

our craft for success and earning of trust. Personally, we have a hard time following the empty shirt officer down the hallway—the officer with lots of certificates and no practical knowledge or experience (everyone knows who those people are in our worlds).

Initially, you must trust your training, the training of your personnel, and your equipment. Just like the famous firefighter quote states: “Let no man’s ghost ever say his training let him down.” You have to ensure your crews are proficient, train constantly, and develop their craft to prepare them for situations encountered on the fireground. Plan A will not always be feasible or work, so you must have a plan B and C that flow as seamlessly as plan A. As an officer, you must lead by example, be proficient, safe, and sensibly aggressive, and simply not be stupid to gain trust of your personnel. They want to do their job and they want to go home, and through training and aggressive operations that come with preparation, you will achieve and gain trust.

Unfortunately, you can lose trust in one split second, when it can take years to develop. You can’t expect to get a second chance in a profession that involves the lives of your personnel and the citizens we are protecting. Do it right and strive for being your best—you’ll likely keep the trust of your personnel.

BEING THE BOSS

The biggest mistake officers make is trying to be everyone’s buddy. There are times you have to be the boss. It’s not always a good job to have, but you most likely are getting paid to be in charge. As an officer, you have to make decisions, and sometimes the outcome of those decisions result in life or death.

We feel you can associate with your personnel, be their friends, and still be their boss. Some of our best friends in life come from the firehouse. We obviously have a very unique set of working conditions: living together, risking our lives together, and spending more time with each other than our families sometimes. If you truly have a friend in the fire department you supervise, they won’t make you have to wear the officer shoes and invoke discipline or will understand when it’s necessary. You must also not play favorites in these situations; people will call you out instantly and this also affects trust and respect.

In addition to being the boss, you have to determine and communicate expectations for your personnel. When expectations are set, you have to lead by example, follow them yourself, and ensure compliance if you want them to mean anything. Some common expectations are:

- Be on time.
- Let the officer know first if something happens. No surprises.
- Always be dressed and ready for fire runs. No complacency.
- Be present at work when you are there. You have to avoid distractions that come with personal life, finances, relationships, alcohol, etc. If there are problems, make sure your people realize it and get help.
- Know your job and do your job.
- Give everyone your game plan for response.
- Get on the apparatus fast so we can get out the door.
- Do what I say on the fireground.
- Open the line when I say, unless you feel its extreme heat, pre-flashover, etc.
- Know how much hose to take, know how to estimate stretch, and execute the stretch.
- Know which hose we’ll use for various fires (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, standpipe, etc.).
- If you don’t know—ASK!

TRAINING

One of the most important functions of the engine company officer is to ensure the training and readiness of your personnel. To initiate this, you must ensure a mastery of the basics, which should focus on practical skills. If you notice deficiencies or issues, fix those first.

If you don’t know where to start, it’s always good to start with the first hoseline on the engine company (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch or 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch) and then worry about everything else. If the 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch can’t be deployed, stretched, flaked, advanced, and operated in the various occupancy types you encounter then it’s pointless to move on to other things until this is mastered. There are a multitude of practice points in deploying a simple pre-connected fire line:

- Removing hose from the apparatus
- Removing right amount of hose (lead length)
- Carrying it effectively (shoulder or arm)
- Dumping the bed (single fire fighter should be able to deploy most pre-connects)
- Flaking the line
- Dealing with obstacles
- Staging enough hose at entrance point or past entrance point for ease of potential future advancement
- Flaking nozzle and coupling appropriately for lead length advance
- When to charge the line
- Donning final PPE (mask, hood, helmet, gloves)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

THE ENGINE OFFICER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



- Bleeding the line, checking stream reach, pullback and pattern

There are so many drill topics and practice take-a-ways for the engine that we could write a book. Keep the evolutions short, simple, and worth the time of everyone. You have to sometimes get creative and stretch at various locations (multi-dwellings, fire station, training facilities, parking lots, playgrounds, schools, parking garages, and vacant buildings).

OTHER PREPARATION

Get out into your running areas and see what is going on. Make sure you look for alterations to buildings or new construction. If you see something, take a moment to stop and check it out. This can sometimes be the best training you can do. An old Type III building that is converted into a loft apartment with lightweight construction shouldn't surprise you. When returning from runs in your running area, on EMS responses, inspecting, returning from the store, and so forth, talk about how to get lines into service in the various structures. This can be a few minutes or 30 to 60 minutes if you actually stretch lines. These types of drills are invaluable for the crew and the company officer to determine what to work on.

In addition to pre-planning and looking at buildings in your area, talk to other shifts. If they have a fire, go look at the building and discuss what you would do if you made the fire. Additionally, when you make a fire, no matter how big or small, use the time during overhaul, cleanup, or when fireground activities are completed to review your operations with your crew and discuss weaknesses and strengths. Don't be afraid to listen to your personnel on ideas about how to do something better or if you or someone made a mistake.

For best results, leave the ego at home. You must make the most out of the fires that you have. It's OK to stretch, flake, and charge at a food-on-the-stove fire to keep guys on their toes—this can be training for the day! As the boss – don't be afraid to ever call for the line to be laid – your personnel want to go through the paces.

DUTIES AT FIRES

Your first priority is the safety of your personnel. This is best achieved by ensuring competence before the alarm. At the alarm, you must be the eyes and ears of reason. Your head must be on a swivel and you must be with your personnel at all times. You can't supervise and command the first hoseline from the front yard. The engine company officer needs to be with the nozzle team (either as the back-up or supervising the nozzle and back-up firefighters). Sending firefighters into hostile fire environments without supervision seems foolish, as direct supervision during a fire is the most important job for the company officer.

In addition to safety of your personnel, the officer must size-up the fire and give a preliminary report. Keep it simple and to the point, including building type and conditions (Engine 12, working fire, first floor in a 2½-story wood frame). You must determine appropriate apparatus placement. Pulling past gives you a three-sided view on arrival (which is often all you need to make decisions as to fire size, location, extent, building layout, terrain issues, etc.). Stopping short may work but has the potential to block the ladder company. Stopping short also makes it more difficult to stretch if you have lines coming off the rear of the apparatus. The engine can always stretch more hose, but the ladder company needs access for their aerial. There is one exception to the ladder company owning the front of the building, if you have major fire or exposure concerns then the engine owns the front of the building for attack with their apparatus-mounted master stream.

You must also determine an offensive or defensive stance based on fire conditions which will determine the size and position of the first line (front door, side door, rear door, rope stretch, etc.). As the line is positioned, you must communicate for water and communicate progress with the incident commander.

One of the best benchmarks for the company officer on the engine is "water on the fire" as it lets others (those searching or venting) know you are likely in position and applying water. You must also indicate if you have the fire knocked down. During the fire fight, you need to commu-



nicate when to open or close the nozzle, where to position the stream if it's not obvious, and stay alert (looking in front, above, to the sides, and behind you). You don't want to pass a fire because you had tunnel vision like the nozzle man. It's your job to see the big picture.

It is our firm belief that the engine company officer shouldn't be the nozzle man. Obviously, those with staffing issues where the officer is the only firefighter have a lot of other concerns to deal with. The officer can't supervise operations and make good decisions for the company when he has tunnel vision as a nozzle man. There is an obvious exception to this belief, and it is when the line needs to be advanced in a hostile environment and someone needs to get more line for the push.

For Example: sending an inexperienced nozzle man or a nozzle man you haven't worked with into that environment may be lethal for them. They likely have had poor training on fire attack or control if that hasn't been a priority of yours. Too many new firefighters are putting out fires in training burn buildings controlled by gas and limited combustibles where fire instructors don't allow total extinguishment. This training technique leads to pulsing of the nozzle during training which translates to similar actions on the fireground. There are times; quick opening and closing of the line doesn't work to control the fire or keep rapid fire progression from happening and inexperienced personnel likely won't recognize this. The line needs to be able to be opened and advanced in the open position by the nozzle team to be effective at some fires. In addition to this situation, through training and working with your company, the officer can move back on the line to stage or hump hose with a nozzle man they trust through their training and experience. Even in this situation, the officer and nozzle man shouldn't be out of voice contact.

The company officer can supervise from the side or front of the nozzle team, especially when the exact fire area isn't readily noticeable. Stretching a line in and out of rooms in a building takes time and energy. The nozzle team should stage as the officer looks into areas and uses his senses (touch, sight, and sound) to determine if a fire is in an area. A thermal imaging camera (TIC) helps greatly in this situation as well. The nozzle team and officer should again remain in voice contact in these situations.

The company officer must be accountable for his company. This doesn't involve fancy nametags or clips that go on a board, it involves knowing where your people are and what they are doing on the fireground. If you have a member moving hose a couple floors below, coming up from a hydrant, or whatever, you need to have a system to



know how to keep track of them. Radios help in this situation and we always tell our people to follow the hose, remove kinks, stage hose in adjacent spaces, and let the officer know verbally face-to-face when they are present. If someone is low on air and needs to be relieved, it's a good idea for the entire company to seek relief. If I send a guy outside, do I really know he makes it out safely all the time?

The size and placement of the hoseline is usually dictated by fire conditions and building/occupancy type. Through experience and training, decisions on the fireground can be made rapidly as to line size and initial position. The first line should go between the fire and victims; usually the front door is the best route to achieve this position. The line should protect the interior stairs from fire extension. As you arrive, three sides should be evaluated at a minimum. You can almost always tell what is going on from a three-sided view (determining walk-out basements, grade issues, layouts, etc.). Additionally, the officer can ask people on scene where the fire is and the best way to get to the fire. In the event of a subdivided building or a building with multiple entrances, the engine officer will have to determine the best entrance point and the nozzle team will have to exercise restraint to avoid improper placement. These actions come easy with training and discipline on the fireground.

After the fire has been knocked down, the immediate fire area should be searched by the company officer as the nozzle man keeps the line ready for flare-ups. Use of a TIC greatly assists in searching for and also locating hidden fire. In our system, the engine officer carries a halligan tool, which can be used to initially open up voids if the ladder company isn't in the fire area yet.

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THE ENGINE OFFICER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Engine Officer Duties & Responsibilities	
Officer Lays the Foundation for the Company & Operations	Set & Communicate Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything relies on the engines ability to get water on the fire • Officer supervises or supports getting line in place - NOT operating the nozzle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earn your companies trust • Buddy 'vs' Boss • Train your company • Building and District Surveys • Identify Hazards & Pre-Plan Bad Buildings

SUMMARY

While we've just broached the numerous topics of discussion for the engine company officer on the fireground, you can see there are a multitude of things that must go into decision making and operations. The officer must be competent, strong willed, a good decision maker, and understand how to adjust on the fly and call an audible when initial plans aren't working.

The company officer is a vital part of the operation. All efforts made by the officer and company should support placement and operation of first water on the fire. If this requires assistance, then ask or call for it. Our number one goal is to put enough water on the fire as quickly as possible to control and extinguish it. This single action on the fireground provides more benefits than any other action. The engine company officer has a huge responsibility and must ensure proficiency and excellence in operations for everyone to truly go home.

Article first appeared in FireRescue Magazine.

THE TOWER LADDER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

- Moving Equipment - lighting, hoses, first aid and removal (stokes) and any other thing that needs to be raised to a location and dropped off.
- Defensive operations - aggressive, non-collapse potential. The tower's effectiveness here in the hands of the aggressive is matchless. For exterior, multi-story operations, begin at the lowest floor of fire and "dance" all over the facade of openings, extinguishing fire and opening ceilings and walls to other compartments. For single-story, commercial structures, drop to the sidewalk and operate a 750-gallon a minute "hand-line" into the openings.
- Maneuverability - with heavy caliber streams. Window to window, floor to floor, store occupancy to store occupancy: impossible for aerial devices with fixed or portable ladder pipes. Firefighter operators in aggressive defensive operations are safe. They are useless on tips of aerials and in danger of injuries they never heard of. Towers operate into depressed areas, off piers, into excavations and more.

Basically, for the last 14 years, my career has been in tower ladders. From their inception, I was a firefighter, then lieutenant and lastly, in command of one. In that time, I responded to more than 20,000 alarms: explosions, fully-involved, hazardous-materials, ships, private as well as multiple dwellings, commercial and whatever you can have in any district. The units that I was assigned to responded to four times that number. The benefit goes to the guys that don't have to do that amount of work to access the lessons. Just ask. The Tower is the greatest piece of structural firefighting equipment available today.

The above thoughts are from Tom Brennan, FDNY retired, who passed away in 2006. This compilation was put together by the guys from 454 Fire Training (<https://www.facebook.com/454fire>). Get the complete set of Tom's published "Random Thoughts" at <http://www.pennwellbooks.com/tom-brennan-random-thoughts>.

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FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

LOCATE, CONFINE, EXTINGUISH

John Salka, Battalion Chief (retired) — FDNY

The concept of locating, confining and then extinguishing a fire is decades old. It is a simple idea, and there is really no reason to develop an acronym to remember such basic elements of the process. While the concept can certainly be broken down into more specific elements, I like to focus on locate, confine and extinguish. Let's take a look at this tried-and-true firefighting strategy.

FIRST, LOCATE

The first action that any fire department must take after arriving at a structural fire is to find it. This sounds pretty simple, but if you have been to even just a few fires, you know that is not always the case.

If you arrive and see smoke issuing from many windows but no visible fire, you have your work cut out for you. Maybe heavier or darker smoke from a lower-floor window will give you a hint as to the location, but you are going to have to go inside and find it. Even if there is visible fire showing from a first-floor window in a two-story house, you are going to have to enter the house to get to that room.

Seeing the fire will give you a great head start in choosing the direction or route you take to get to it. The one thing you must remember is that there are hundreds of variables at every fire. Some questions: Has the fire area already flashed over or not? How many doorways connect

this room to other rooms within the house? Are the doors opened or closed? Did the fire originate in another room and extend into the room that you see the fire venting from? What is the fire load? Did the fire burn up through the floor from the basement below? Is this a gasoline-fed arson fire or an accidental electrical fire?

There are more, but as you can see, we simply don't have the time to collect all of these answers before going to work. Another issue that can make this first step more difficult is staffing. If you don't have enough firefighters on scene initially to assign a search team ahead of the attack hoseline, then this function must be conducted by a team that is advancing a charged hoseline at the same time. Can you spell d-i-f-f-i-c-u-l-t?

NEXT, CONFINE & EXTINGUISH

So let's say you make a rapid entry with a hoseline into the front door of a two-story private dwelling with fire showing from a second-story window on the left side, front of the house. You quickly ascend the interior stairs to the second floor and make a left turn at the top of the stairway.

As you move closer to the room, the heat increases and the smoke condition intensifies. You can now see the door to the involved room and it is open. The fire is well developed and flames are beginning to extend into the hallway.

FIREFIGHTERS



The concept of locating, confining and then extinguishing a fire is decades old. It is a simple idea, and there is really no reason to develop an acronym to remember such basic elements of the process.

You stop, take aim with the nozzle and begin to attack the fire. Without really knowing it, you have arrived at the spot where the burned meets the unburned, and you are literally pushing in with your attack hose line, rotating or whipping the line back and forth and extinguishing the fire and pushing much of the smoke and heated gases and other products of combustion out the window that fire self-vented before you arrived.

If the first firefighters to enter this house were not advancing a hose line but instead were a truck company tasked with finding the fire, they would probably take the same route to the fire area, but when they arrived, they would not have a hose line. These firefighters would now have to confine this fire by closing the door or using a

2½-gallon pressurized water extinguisher to hold it to the room of origin. These confining tactics can play a major role in keeping the fire at bay while the engine crew gets the attack hose line in position for extinguishment.

Now we haven't even mentioned victims encountered or reported trapped in the house. Whether there are reports of people trapped or not, firefighters advancing inside a burning house must assume that they could encounter a victim. If a victim is discovered by the firefighters advancing a hose line or searching without a hose line, the victim needs to be dealt with immediately. If no victims are encountered, later-arriving crews can be assigned that task.

IT'S SIMPLE!

Locate, confine and extinguish sounds so simple, doesn't it? It sounds simple because it is simple! It's not always easy. It's not always fast. But it works.

Article first appeared in Firehouse Magazine, August 2015.

Locate, confine and extinguish sounds so simple, doesn't it? It sounds simple because it is simple! It's not always easy. It's not always fast. But it works.

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COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

MAXIMIZING COMPANY PERFORMANCE

As a company officer you have to be many things to many people (those you serve and those you command). The public and on-scene operational issues in my experiences are the easier part of the job — *If you don't have that part dialed in then you should probably stop reading and go focus on those things!* As a company officer, you should first be a sound firefighter. Being sound, means being proficient or even masterful in all aspects of the jobs you are expected to perform on the fireground. If you are in charge of an engine — you must be very proficient in size-up, hose selection, placement, advancement and hose line operation and search. You should also have a sound grasp of the traditional ladder company functions, such as: forcible entry, ventila-

tion, overhaul, salvage and laddering. If you are in charge of a ladder company you need to be proficient in everything except the hose line part. To be most successful, you need to always have a grasp of what the other functions are and where people are supposed to be and what they are supposed to be doing — even if you aren't doing those jobs.

The firehouse is an interesting and dynamic place that can be intimidating and sometimes out of control. As a company officer you have to make sure your personnel are: capable (*training*), proficient (*training*), masterful (*drilling*), mentally focused, mentally tough (*training & drilling*), not complacent, fit, decisive and ready for battle. You also have to some-

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MAXIMIZING COMPANY PERFORMANCE...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

times wear the hats of: big brother, dad, counselor, dictator and politician. You have to live with people during your shift, command them at fires and emergencies and ensure your daily work gets done. You have to keep the peace, work on issues between personnel and keep everyone ready for what we are supposed to be on-duty for – response!

One of the best ways to succeed as a company officer is through the utilization of senior personnel on your company who embrace your direction as a company officer. While I've been somewhat lucky in my career by being assigned to companies where this was an easy position to identify and develop – I know others aren't always so lucky. There are a lot of senior men out there that are just "paycheck collectors" and the fire department serves as their rest and relaxation from their off-day life. There are a lot of senior men, and also too many new guys, that feel they are experienced and good because they are on a big fire department or a busy company. There are a lot of people out there in the fire service that use their years of service as an excuse not to do more or be better. In reality, 20-30 years of poor service, no training and bad experiences, doesn't make you experienced, it just makes you an old guy in the firehouse. I make the joke every once in a while that the chain of command on the company goes from me to the driver (permanent spot on the company) to the firefighters. It then goes upwards in the same direction. The only time it is bypassed is when something bad is happening (ie: response). While this isn't true or enforced, it always works for the newer personnel assigned to the company to believe this is the case and gets the other guys working towards continuity on the company in passing along my expectations and directions before I have to. I often don't have to tell a new guy or a detail what to expect, how we go to work, our equipment layout, expectations on certain runs and so forth before my guys are doing it for me. Once I get my initial work and equipment checks done, I do review it with them so they hear it from me and reinforce what the guys have told them.

The personnel on your company and their actions on and off the fireground reflect directly on the company officer. Sure it is a pride thing for most to not want to suck and be a laughing stock of the fire department. Pride can be a good thing and definitely is in the fire service. Without pride, can you truly be a good fireman? Without some pride, can a fire company truly be a good company? I believe not. Pride is extremely important in winning on

the fireground. By wanting to do a good job and not look stupid – you will more than likely train and practice to develop proficiency and embrace a "no failure – get the job done" mentality.

One question that is often posed is how do you deal with the member on your company who doesn't want to do anything, who doesn't want to train or who makes you look bad – especially when they don't care?

Unfortunately, there is no real clear-cut textbook answer for this, only some practices that have worked in the past.

I've always said that you can outwork anyone with persistence and dedication. If you have a "turd" on your company and the others realize this and are unhappy with the "turd" doing less work, not wanting to be on everyone else's page – then the solution is easy. **DO WORK!** The fire department and fire station have a lot of work that needs to be done, some mandated and some not.

Here are some pointers:

- **Lead by example** - If you are going to have work be done, you have to do it too. Especially if its not routine work (dishes, bathrooms, mop, garbage).
- **Be consistent** – don't vary from your mission and drive.
- **Train every day** with hands on training evolutions on tasks your fire company is to perform at a fire or emergency – get dirty and sweaty (wear PPE, lay fire lines, raise ladders, practice searching). Drill in the evening sometimes to ensure work in the dark. Don't let a misty rainy day, humid day or cold weather alter your plans.
- Limit down time by ensuring tasks are spread out during the day. Personnel need to eat and rest in the evening if you are doing a 24-hour shift – but a 2pm nap can't be allowed if you are trying to get a point across.
- **Learn your running area** – drill on streets and water and mandate proficiency from the members on your company.
- **Get out and see your area** - preplan buildings, walk around neighborhoods, check building systems, walk around big complexes and best of all – walk stairs in tall buildings (exercise, familiarization with building, review and identify standpipe connections (standard, PRV or PRD valves).

You can have success by developing a routine of hard work, training and readiness exercises. People who don't

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

MAXIMIZING COMPANY PERFORMANCE...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

want to be good firemen aren't going to stick around and if they do, they won't stick around too long. You can't break rules or show favoritism – everyone has to be held to the same standards and if you are called into a meeting with a white shirt – you must justify your actions in accordance with established practices or rules. If you expect the "turd" to do it, then the shining star and you have to be able to do it too.

Some people feel if you make people be proficient by training and practicing their skill set on a frequent basis, making them sweat or get tired – you might be using this as discipline to get someone to transfer or leave. I have had an occasion where I've used several hours of training to get a message of seriousness across to a younger firefighter who wasn't on the same page as the rest of the company. This eye opening lesson worked, could be classified as disciplinary, but it was practical training that directly related to the functions of the fire company we were assigned. This firefighter was exhausted and functioned poorly later at a fire; however we still did our job as a company. The message hit home with this person and the rest of the company that day – we will be serious and train seriously for this job! Additionally – everyone, including myself participated and performed at the drill. Following that episode, remaining consistent and following patterns of work as outlined above led to change in the person and an eventual transfer.

I have a couple boys (ages 10 and 4) and an older daughter. The boys are always trying their boundaries and struggle with things like self-control, listening, lying and overall making poor choices at times (The same things I did....). Everyone, including my children, are humans that

are prone to making mistakes and learning. My job as a father is to ensure they are healthy, stay alive and grow up to be respectful, capable assets to society who know right from wrong. If my kids can learn to take care of themselves, respect authority, take care of their family, work hard and do the right thing when faced with adversity – I've probably won in raising them. I use the same work concept with success at home to portray messages to my children with great success. For them when they make serious mistakes, don't listen, lie, etc - telling them I'm going to make them dig holes and then following through with making them dig holes, no matter the time or weather has worked wonders. It has helped them understand that through lying, cheating, not following directions and poor self-control there are consequences that are not good. I've stressed that if you can't do the right thing later in life you might be subjected to a poor job or occupation where you don't get to do what you want and have to work very hard to survive – its working now and maybe in 10 years we'll see if it really worked.

I told you my story about my kids to tie the fire station and parenthood together. As the company officer – sometimes the issues and problems are the same in both situations and the solutions are similar. The main difference is that you can't have your kids transferred. In all reality if the "turd" fireman is a good fireground fireman, but a "turd" elsewhere – turning them around might be best. Through hard work, reinforcement of expectations on a consistent basis and discussion – maybe everyone can get on the same page. Be consistent, focus on doing work and you can have success in both places – even if its not wanted or desired in the beginning!

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NOVEMBER 10-12, 2015





TRAINING SAVES LIVES

FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

LEARNING THE BASICS IT'S THE FOUNDATION THAT LEADS TO EXCELLENCE

Bob Staulators — FDNY

Growing up, I was afforded many great fortunes. My Father and Great Grandfather were two of those "fortunes." Both of these men were hardworking, honest, intelligent and extremely skilled. My Great Grandfather had been an excellent auto mechanic, owning his own shop. He seemed to be able to fix anything and always had a solution to your problem. My Father was, and is, an extremely talented Electrical Engineer for General Electric and he too seems to be able to fix anything and nearly solve any problem you have.

Being constantly around these two men, it afforded the opportunity to constantly see excellence in action. No matter the job, they both knew the proper way to complete whatever projects they had and they took immense pride in completing the jobs the "right way."

Living with these two men meant that I was constantly under their guidance and tutelage. Naturally, you wanted to be like them. You wanted to have their skills and be able to complete the advanced projects they did. They of course were always willing to teach, but the lessons that came were not the ones we expected.

One of my first exposures to the lessons we would learn and how those lesson would be taught was in my third grade year. Cursive was the topic and I came home with work to do. I was to practice each letter and then write a paragraph. Already being a genius, I raced through the practice part and then wrote my paragraph. Proud, I reported to my Dad with my completed work. He needed only one look and back to the desk I went. He instructed that I would sit and complete the practice letters properly. Once they met his standard, only then would I write the

paragraph. True to his word, I was sent back once more to properly complete the practice letters before writing the paragraph. I would understand the basics of the task before continuing.

The lessons that followed throughout the years, from both of these men, followed a similar pattern. Math and science; baseball and wrestling; splitting wood or working with the chain saw; driving the 4-wheelers, snowmobiles or the car; using tools; even answering the phone. We would understand the basics of the task at hand and then, and only then, could we continue on with the skill or job. Sometimes it was frustrating and well, *why couldn't we just do what Dad or Grampy did...*

Several years later, in my late teens or early twenties, my Father suddenly became a genius. It was an amazing change. He was wise, he was smart and he had the solutions I needed. Around the same time, all of the lessons, all of the focus on the "basics" suddenly made sense. All of the skills Dad and Grampy had, all of the knowledge, the ability to fix anything and complete any task was the result of their own focus on the basics. They had been developing their "basic" skills and their "basic" knowledge over many years. Their mastery of the "basics" was what lead to their excellence in performance.

In the modern fire service, it sometimes seems as if the desire to not only learn, but master the basics of what we do, has been lost. However, the basics are what matter. They are what make the difference.

FIREFIGHTERS



Here are some examples of basic skills that make the difference at every fire:

- Understanding basic fire behavior and how/where it will travel within a structure.
- Identifying the different types of buildings in your area, how they're constructed and what additional hazards might exist.
- Choosing and knowing how to stretch and get an appropriate-sized handline into operation at the appropriate location.
- Understanding the importance of flaking the line out, and chasing kinks.
- Knowing how to hook up to a standpipe and how to set the proper operating pressure
- How to secure an adequate water supply.
- How to supply another engine.
- Understanding what tools to carry (ie: Hook and Halligan), why you're carrying those tools, and how you're going to use them.
- Understanding how to search and what you're searching for (location of fire and/or possible victims).
- Understanding how to use your mask and what to do if a malfunction occurs.
- Understanding how to choose an appropriate-sized ground ladder and knowing how to use it.
- Understanding how, when and why to vent...and then knowing where to vent based on fire conditions(vertical verses horizontal).
- Understanding how to force inward and outward swinging doors and then knowing and applying the various techniques to do so.

- Understanding VES; when, why and how you'll do it.
- Understanding "through the lock" entry skills and how to apply them.
- Being able to give clear and concise reports when conditions warrant.
- Knowing the tools on your rig, how to use them and in what situations each tool will work best.
- Knowing how to wear your "gear" correctly and understanding the limits of the gear you have.
- Knowing the firefighting procedures your department provides to you and understanding when and how to apply those procedures (ie: Being in the right position).
- Understanding the "job" or "position" assigned to each member and how all those "jobs" work in conjunction to put the fire out (ie: Engine and Ladder Company functions complimenting one another).
- Understanding the basic emergency medical skills we should know and understanding how to apply those skills when called.

This is just a short list of the many basic skills that each one of us should possess as firefighters. The reality is: The basic skills are the foundation of what leads to excellence. The mastering of these basic skills will lead to one becoming an excellent firefighter, one that can be counted on each time you head out the door.

For more from Bob and 454FIRE Training visit their Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/454fire>.



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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

LEADERSHIP

15 RULES TO EFFECTIVELY LEAD

Nick Palmisciano — US Army (retired)

DON'T BE A DOUCHE

I am dead serious. Nothing pissed me off more than watching some wannabe tough guy treat his people like shit and then hear someone say "that's his leadership style". NO-GO. I fully admit there are a lot of ways of running a unit, but the foundation of leadership is integrity and love for your people. You can be hard and have high standards, but you cannot treat people like their existence is to serve you, amuse you, and accelerate your career. That is not a leadership style, it's an ego trip. Get over yourself.

My first boss was a hard ass. We had the best-trained unit in the Brigade because he was always pushing for additional training. On the surface of it, one would argue he was doing everything right. When one of my NCOs found out his mother was dying, the commander actually tried to convince him that he shouldn't go see her, because his guys needed him more. This was pre-9/11. He was willing to trade one of his men's last moments with his mother in order to minimize the risk that his unit might get a slightly lower grade on the training exercise.

Instantly, everyone realized that all his training wasn't to take care of us at all – this guy was really just a spotlight Ranger. His actions led to my first counseling by the

A lot of guys make the mistake of thinking that because they have achieved a certain rank, or have a certain degree; they are in some way superior to the others in their unit.

Battalion Commander, but that is a different story. In short, don't be a douche.

YOUR GUYS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR CAREER

This ties in nicely with my last point, but it is worthy of its own bullet. You're all going to be civilians someday, no matter how much you love the military or how long you serve. Years from now, the fact that you made Colonel or Sergeant Major won't erase the fact that you threw some unsuspecting subordinate under the bus to avoid punishment, and it certainly won't remove a stupid decision you made based on pressure from above that got someone killed or injured. Every leader I've ever respected has been willing to stand in the Gates of Fire when it mattered. If you're not willing to do this for your people, be honest with yourself and quit. Join corporate America – you'll just annoy people, not get them killed, and you'll make more money. Everyone wins.

BE GOOD AT YOUR JOB

Every day you should be working your ass off to be technically and tactically skilled (note I didn't say proficient – you need to be better than that). You should be asking questions, reading, practicing, and training. You can be a super-nice dude or dudette who loves your troops, but if you don't know how to train them, lead them, and they aren't ready for combat, you are a colossal failure. If you look deep inside, you'll know the truth of where you are in this regard. Either fix it or quit.



IT'S NOT YOUR PLATOON

Imagine you'd been doing a job for 12-15 years and grew so good at it that you were chosen ahead of others to lead 40 men into combat...with one caveat. You're not actually in charge – some kid young enough to be your son is in charge...and you have to train him... but he hates you. You couldn't make this shit up, right? When you're walking into that platoon, appreciate the fact that you're not the badass here. You, like your men and your platoon sergeant, have a job to do, and it is your job to do that as best you can. Acknowledge their experience and allow them to help you grow.

Towards the end of my time with my first platoon, my platoon sergeant and I were a team to be envied. We had figured out who was going to do what and we had each other's backs. He had been very "anti-PL" over the last few years (I was his fourth platoon leader), but decided to give me a chance when I shook his hand for the first time and said, "SFC Stewart – it looks like I'll be spending a year or so in your platoon. Thanks for having me." I'll give full credit to my dad, a former NCO, for that one but it was my firm intent to let him know I needed to learn and that I respected his position and sacrifice, and our men benefited as a result.

IT IS YOUR PLATOON

We were at CMTC getting ready for our field problem. I was at an OPORD and my platoon sergeant had everyone in the bay cleaning equipment. Two of my new soldiers got into a fistfight over something stupid (one of them fancied himself a rapper and the other one felt his rap sucked – damn eighteen year olds). My platoon sergeant punished them by having the entire platoon outside in the mud wearing all of their recently cleaned equipment. He was smoking the ever-loving shit out of them when I rolled up on the scene. Spotting me, he made the motion to stay back (this was NCO business). So I hung low and watched from a distance so my guys couldn't see me. Just then Sergeant Major Chickenhawk rolled up – the same Sergeant Major that I hated and had recently outlawed this kind of "hazing" because it was politically expedient to do so. He grabbed my platoon sergeant by the shoulder and started digging into him in front of my guys. I ran over and told the CSM that this was my platoon and that he could have the conversation with me. He told me that this was NCO business and I responded that my platoon sergeant was acting under my command with

You're not in charge because you're the smartest or most talented or anything else – you're in charge because you signed up to be the LT. Don't act superior, because you aren't – just do your job.

my permission to discipline the men. He walked me over to the battalion commander. They had me don my gear and do mud PT to "show me" how it felt. Well – you can't smoke a rock.

Yes, your platoon sergeant has more experience. Yes, he can run circles around you in a lot of areas. Yes, he should probably be in charge over you – but he isn't. You are, and anything that happens or fails to happen in your platoon is your responsibility. Furthermore, in this scenario, I had a great platoon sergeant and I agreed with him. But not all platoon sergeants are good and not all good platoon sergeants are always right – you need to trust your own judgment and execute accordingly, even if it means piss-ing your PSG off.

DON'T LIE, EVER, FOR ANY REASON

This isn't grade school. Your actions matter. If you screw up, admit it as soon as possible, even if you think it'll hurt your career. The team cannot work on a solution until they know the truth, and this is one of the few jobs in the world where lies can get people killed. Furthermore, the military, for all its faults, is one of the few places on earth where honest mistakes are actually forgiven. Conversely, it is one of the few places where lies are extravagantly and brutally punished, and rightly so.

YOU MAKE MISTAKES – ADMIT THEM

Don't be that guy. Your men don't expect perfection. They expect you to strive every day for perfection. You'll be wrong a lot. Fess up, get over it, get their feedback and drive on. They will respect you infinitely more and they will trust you for it, as opposed to committing themselves over and over again to proving, quite creatively and to everyone's amusement, that you are often wrong.

LEADER IS NOT EQUAL TO BFF

I loved my guys. I still love my guys, even though I'm very far removed from being in command. Many good-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



15 RULES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

TRAINING SAVES LIVES

FDTN'S COMBAT-READY FIREGROUND SKILLS COMPETITION



FDTN's Combat-Ready Fireground Skills Competition is going to be an amazing event series! Simply put, no keyboarding, no texting, no commenting, and no anonymous screen names to hide behind. You and your partner will have one way to make your statement...through your performance.

Each individual station will be timed and scored based on completion of the task! Speed comes from proficiency and rushing leads to mistakes. It's really not going to matter how big your department is, or whether you respond on an engine, truck or something else...else...ultimately, performance is the only thing that matters.

Fireground Skills Stations will include:

- Forcible Entry
- Search
- Ladder Rescues
- Fire Attack
- And a few more that are sure to put your skills to the test...

The *Combat-Ready Fireground Skills Competition* will be made up of two-person teams...so start looking for your partner and perfecting your skills. At the end of the day it really is about performance and that only comes from knowing your job inside and out! Regional event announcements will be coming soon so wanted to give everyone a heads-up to start honing their skills. Watch for details at www.fdtraining.com.

intentioned leaders make the mistake of believing that being a great leader means never having your guys be upset with you and hanging out with them all the time. There's nothing wrong with taking your platoon out for a night on the town. There's nothing wrong with socializing with guys when you bump into them at a bar. There is something wrong with passing out on your PV2s couch at 3AM. Once you become "one of the guys," you're no longer their leader, and they need you to be in charge a lot more than they need another buddy.

YOU'RE NOT THE SMARTEST GUY IN THE PLATOON

A lot of guys make the mistake of thinking that because they have achieved a certain rank, or have a certain degree; they are in some way superior to the others in their unit. In my first platoon alone, I had 7/20 privates or specialists with college degrees – one with a master's degree. One of them was literally a genius, having maxed out the MENSA (weak-ass organization, by the way) test. You're not in charge because you're the smartest or most talented or anything else – you're in charge because you signed up to be the LT. Don't act superior, because you aren't – just do your job.

YOU CAN NEVER QUIT

You don't have to be the fastest runner, or do the most pushups, or be the best at combatives, or be the best shot, but you can never quit. The second your guys see you give up, you've lost them. Period.

YOU ARE NOT THE FOCAL POINT OF YOUR SUBORDINATE'S LIVES

They don't spend their nights thinking about you, your speeches, or your goals. They have wives, kids, girlfriends, bills, friends, and problems. Acknowledge that – your men are not here to serve you. They're here to serve your country. You're here to serve them.

BUT YOUR SUBORDINATES WATCH EVERYTHING YOU DO

Just because they don't live their lives around you, doesn't mean you're not important to them. If you lie, they assume it is okay. If you quit, they assume it is okay.



Your actions, not your mission statements, speeches, codes, creeds, etc. will set their standard of behavior.

GET YOUR BOSS'S BACK

Everyone wants to be in charge...until they are there. We all think we could do a better job than our boss – sometimes it's very true and sometimes it isn't – but as long as he or she is working hard to take care of your men and complete the mission, you owe it to them to ensure they succeed. You'll be there someday, and you'll find that despite your best efforts, you are very fallible.

HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR

You will be tested. When I came on board my first platoon, my guys tried to get me with every snipe hunt in the book – PRC-E8, keys to the indoor mortar range, box of grid squares – you name it. Skillfully, I held out for three weeks, until that day in the motor pool. In formation, the motor chief announced that today was the day that everyone had to turn in vehicle exhaust samples. Promptly, the motor sergeants disseminated to each platoon a vehicle exhaust sample kit, which included labels, sharpies, and garbage bags. My guys grabbed the bags, turned on their vehicles and began throwing the garbage bags around the exhaust pipe, filling it, then promptly tying the bag off and labeling it. This just didn't seem right – all the more so when they asked if I wanted to help get samples. I balked. They guilt tripped me. Finally, even though I was at least 25% sure I was being had, I filled a bag with exhaust and started walking to drop it off at the motor chief's office. Sure enough, they snapped about 2000 pictures of this jackass 2LT running around with a bag of exhaust.

They got their laughs and busted my balls about it. We were about to head to an 18-hour computer simulation exercise. Immediately afterwards they had a room inspection with all their gear laid out. They, of course, had done this the night before, knowing they'd be going right from the exercise to the inspection.

As all the guys moved to the simulator, all the officers got called back to the bays for the OPORD. When I came back, I asked them, "Don't you guys have an inspection tomorrow?"

"Roger, sir" they responded.

"Man, it'd suck if someone dumped everyone's gear into one huge pile and then covered it in baby powder, wouldn't it?" I asked.

Every leader I've ever respected has been willing to stand in the Gates of Fire when it mattered. If you're not willing to do this for your people, be honest with yourself and quit. Join corporate America – you'll just annoy people, not get them killed, and you'll make more money. Everyone wins.

Their faces dropped. They hated me. I had gone way too far and clearly was getting back at them for the exhaust sample thing. For the rest of the exercise it was hard to get anyone to talk to me – even my platoon sergeant was edgy.

The exercise ended and we all came back to the bays – they knew they only had an hour to salvage the inspection. When they busted into their bay, they found that none of their stuff had been touched and was in perfect inspection mode.

"Sir, you are a frigging dick!" my platoon sergeant shouted.

"Why's that sergeant?" I asked.

"You said you dumped all our shit out on the floor and covered it in baby powder!"

"No, sergeant – I said it would suck if someone were to do that." I smiled.

I could take it, but I could give it back too. There would be no more frigging with this LT.

DO THE RIGHT THING

This is the last and perhaps most important aspect of leadership. I am a big believer that in almost every single case, people know the right course of action. The bigger question is whether they have the courage to make the right decision, even when making that decision could be personally harmful. Decide now to always be a force of good. Don't justify away indiscretions. Don't sell out. Your life will be easier, your men will respect you more, and you'll sleep at night. More importantly, you won't start down that slippery slope towards being one of those leaders that will do anything to get ahead. We all want to think we're the next coming of Patton or Eisenhower. No one thinks they are a bad leader, but it doesn't take much to get there and it happens incrementally – one little lie or moral concession at a time.

Source: <http://rhinoden.rangerup.com/nicks-rules-on-leadership>



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

TRAINING PROPS

LEADERSHIP & ATTITUDE

Frank Viscuso, Deputy Chief — Kearny, NJ, Fire Department

Every adversity you and the team you are leading will ever encounter is either a problem or an opportunity. Although one might think there are many different variables that would distinguish one from the other, there is really only one difference between the two — YOUR ATTITUDE. That's right. Often times the difference between a problem and an opportunity has everything to do with how you look at the challenge at hand.

Opportunities exist everywhere, but they are often disguised as challenges and/or problems. Of course, the opportunities may not always be obvious, but they are always there no matter how dire the situation appears. Problems are obstacles, but leadership is about overcoming obstacles. **The level of success you and your team will achieve will be in direct proportion with your ability to adapt and overcome.** Show me a championship team that has beaten the odds in any arena and I will show you a team that has a leader who has mastered the art of overcoming.

In the fire service, we fight fires, overcome challenges, and prepare for new fires and new challenges. The fire we fought yesterday is yesterday's news because no two fires are the same. We have to prepare to fight another — differ-

ent — fire tomorrow. As a leader, your job is to "prepare" for success. "Hope" is not a strategy. You will certainly have to take calculated risks along your journey because it's the only way to put yourself in a position to achieve bigger goals. However, things can and often will go wrong at one point or another. Much of your success will be a result of your ability to solve problems. Firefighters know this better than anybody else. They exist to solve problems. When it comes to leading a team, great things often follow adversity, if you have the guts to face it head on and not use it as an excuse to fail. **Every time you overcome an obstacle, you become stronger, wiser and more capable.**

The next time you are in a room full of your peers, look around and pick the person who has achieved the highest level of success. You will also be looking at the person who has failed the most. These people look at challenges and failure differently than most. They understand that crisis is not the developer of character. Crisis is the greatest revealer of character. They understand that once a person deals with and overcomes big problems, they equip themselves with confidence, ability, and the proper mindset to be able to do it again.

FOR MORE FROM FRANK, OR FOR A COPY OF HIS BOOK STEP UP AND LEAD, VISIT HIS WEB SITE WWW.COMMONVALOR.COM

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APPLICATION ON BACK...



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS

SECOND DUE ENGINE COMPANY DUTIES



When arriving as the first-due engine company at a working fire, the priorities are pretty cut and dry: Secure a water supply, place the apparatus out of the truck's way, and stretch the attack line. Once the initial attack line is placed between the occupants and the fire, advance onto the fire to extinguish it at its origin. Those are the basics of engine company operations—but what are our responsibilities when we're the *second*-due engine at a working fire?

GOT WATER

The first question you must ask yourself is whether to secure a water supply. This will depend largely on your

department's standard operating procedures (SOPs) and how your first-due engine went to work. As we've stated in previous articles, we're firm believers that *every* engine company should establish their own source of water, because it provides an additional water supply to the fire-ground, as well as an added measure of safety in the event that the first-due engine's water supply is interrupted. Plus, an engine without water is really just an expensive taxi. Once you've established a water supply, place your apparatus as close to the scene as possible—but without blocking the truck companies. We'll discuss why this is important later.

STRETCHING LINES

After appropriately positioning the second-due engine, take a minute to evaluate the hose stretch of the first-due engine. Most of the fires we respond to are extinguished using the initial attack line from the first-due engine, but if the placement of the initial attack line is going to be a difficult or long stretch, your company should help the first-due engine get their line in place.

Make sure the line is stretched and flaked out to avoid any kinking issues. It will be tempting to try to beat the first-due to the fire with your line, but you must resist the urge! Putting the first line on the fire in the shortest amount of time is in the best interest of the occupants and firefighters (especially those searching), so help the first-due engine get their line in place; they will return the

FIREFIGHTERS



favor someday. Once the first-due line is stretched, the second engine needs to stretch a back-up line to support the initial attack line and to protect the first-due hose team from fire moving behind them as they enter the structure. This line also serves as a safety line in the event that the initial hoseline loses water. But from which engine should you stretch the back-up line?

It depends. Ideally, you should advance the back-up line from the second-due engine with its own water supply, because doing so provides you with 1) two completely independent hoselines operating within the structure and 2) the best safety measure in the event that one of the engines loses water. The challenge comes when the second engine isn't close enough to reasonably stretch the back-up line. This is why it's important to position the second-due engine as close to the fire building as possible. If the placement of the second-due engine is nowhere near the fire building, then the back-up line will need to come off the first-due engine.

HOSELINE SIZE & LENGTH

After determining which engine will stretch the back-up line, you must then decide what size and length of hoseline you'll need. The general rule of thumb: The back-up line should be the same size line, or greater, than the initial attack line; however, this rule only applies to *residential structures*. If the first-due engine made the mistake of pulling a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hoseline on a commercial structure, don't compound the problem by stretching another! Use 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hose for commercial occupancies. With regard to hose length, keep in mind that the back-up line needs to be at least as long as the initial hoseline if

stretching from the first-due engine and longer if stretching from your engine. Hoseline placement within the structure should also be considered when estimating hose length.

GOING IN

When advancing into the structure, the back-up line must follow the initial hoseline into the building through the same entrance and remain a short distance behind the initial team. The back-up line should be charged and ready to be put into operation in the event that the first line loses water or the fire overpowers the initial line. If the back-up line is needed to control the fire, it's no longer a back-up line—it's an additional attack line. When this happens, notify command immediately, as a new back-up line will need to be deployed. In multiple-story buildings, the back-up line should be deployed as discussed above; however, if the initial attack line is controlling and extinguishing the fire, the officer of the second-due engine should reposition the back-up line above the fire to stop fire extension. In this instance, you must estimate extra hose into your stretch to cover the floor above the fire.

Operating as a second-due engine requires fire officers to make some crucial decisions in a short amount of time, but it also requires you to have a mindset that's different from that of the first-due crew. Although you're not going to be first-in, your tasks are equally as important to the success of the operation. Remember and train on the back-up line basics, and you'll have a solid foundation for both your mindset and your attack strategy.

Article first appeared in FireRescue Magazine, June 2011.



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FIRE & TRAINING



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FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

FIVE POINTS OF COMMAND

Bob Pressler, Lieutenant (retired) – FDNY

A nighttime alarm comes in for a building fire. The block is a familiar one for working fires. As you respond, the dispatch office notifies you of numerous phone calls reporting a fire in a vacant building. The nighttime sky shows a definite glow in the direction of the alarm. As you continue your response, you start to plan possible strategies to use at this fire.

On arrival, you find a 2½-story vacant frame building heavily involved in fire. Fire is showing in all the second-floor windows and is venting through much of the roof. There are exposures on sides 2 and 4, separated by small alleys. The glow of the fire is visible in exposure 4, a similar vacant building, through the partially boarded windows. Exposure 2 is a 1½-story frame dwelling that appears to be vacant. The fire is endangering both expo-

sures, and from the front it is hard to tell if there is a rear exposure.

Regardless of the assignment that your department responds with, certain factors will always come into play. Whether you are the first-arriving officer or the responding chief, you must ensure that all players work from the same action plan. One plan you can use is called the "Five Points of Command," a simple plan that is suited to fires of any size. The five points are:

- Attack the fire
- Back up the attack
- Cover the exposures
- Ventilate the fire
- Search the fire

Think of and cover these five points!

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Regardless of the assignment that your department responds with, certain factors will always come into play. Whether you are the first-arriving officer or the responding chief, you must ensure that all players work from the same action plan.

ATTACK THE FIRE

This is often the easiest of the five points to accomplish. In this case, it is a large fire, so the attack must be with large water. This is not a fire for 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch handlines. This fire is threatening several structures at once. You need to attack the fire and stop it where it is now, especially with vacant, frame buildings. If the first-due engine is able to, it should position the apparatus to use the apparatus-mounted master stream device. Position the apparatus to get water on both the main fire building and the most severe exposure. This way you get water on and between the burning buildings. The officer of the first engine must ensure that the apparatus is positioned away from overhead power lines and out of any collapse zone. He must also be aware of the dangers of radiant heat.

If the first-due engine doesn't have a master stream device, the engine should leave room for either the second-due engine (if it is so equipped) or an elevated platform or other type of aerial apparatus. Once water is flowing on the main body of fire, the second point of the plan can be addressed.

BACK UP THE ATTACK

For a fire of this magnitude, the backup line will most likely be a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch handline or another master stream device. The backup, regardless of what size or type, must go to the same place as the first attack line. The officer of this second line must check in with the first line to ensure that the first line is not running into any difficulties. If the first or attack line is having any problems, such as too much fire, a burst length of hose, or not being able to make any headway, the second line should remain at this position to operate. The most important fireground task is still to get the first line into the proper position and operating.

At this fire, once the master stream is in operation, the backup line can attack the fire in the most exposed building. This keeps the backup line in the vicinity of the first line, the crew that it is actually backing up. If staffing is a



problem and help is far away, then the backup line may have to be pressed into service covering the other exposure.

COVER THE EXPOSURES

When considering fire exposures, remember to count all six sides of the fire as potential problems. Fire normally spreads upward, but it may also spread downward if there is a path for it to follow. Such a path might be an open stairway, a shaft, or another void space such as the stud void in balloon-frame construction. In fires where there is only a narrow gangway between buildings, place a line between the fire building and the most severely exposed building. Once you have darkened down the main body of fire in the original building, you may have to advance smaller handlines into both buildings to complete extinguishment. From the interior, you will have to open the walls until you have exposed the exterior siding on both buildings. This is the only way to be sure that you have exposed and extinguished all the hidden fire.

VENTILATE AND SEARCH

The fourth and fifth steps in the action plan are sometimes done together. Ventilation falls into two general categories, vertical and horizontal. Vertical ventilation is performed to provide an avenue for smoke and heat to escape to the outside as well as let fresh air into the fire area. As the nozzle team advances into the fire area, proper and

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

FIVE POINTS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



timely ventilation in front of its attack will assist the advance. Without horizontal ventilation, the heat and steam from the attack will be pushed back onto the engine company. Just because the fire has self-vented, do not think that additional venting is not needed. You still should vent adjoining rooms in the fire area to improve conditions in the fire apartment for any trapped civilians. If your department is trained in VES (vent-enter-search), these additional windows become entry points for search. Horizontal ventilation must be timed for when the engine has water and is ready to advance into the fire area, except for when the opening will be used for entry and search.

Vertical ventilation will depend on the type of building involved. In flat-roof buildings, you must perform vertical

ventilation as soon as possible to prevent mushrooming of heat and smoke on the upper floors. You can accomplish this initial ventilation by removing or opening all the natural vent points. These include scuttles, skylights, and bulkhead doors. If fire conditions dictate, you may need to make additional ventilation openings in the roof surface itself.

In peaked-roof buildings, initial roof operations are reserved for certain fires. Fires that originate in the attic areas as well as fires that are extending into this area will require early roof operations. This includes fires in 1½-story houses with finished half stories. These fires are extremely punishing, and without roof ventilation the engine will normally have to wait for the roof to burn through to be able to move up into the fire area. Other fires that require early venting include those in large Victorian-style and balloon-frame homes.

Whether your department uses VES or not, interior companies must also be ready to perform searches for any trapped or overcome victims. These interior searches may be off of the advancing handline or, depending on fire location in the apartment or house, in areas remote from the hoseline's advance. If searching remote from the handline, always search toward a secondary means of escape in case fire conditions drastically change.

Although these five points are not all the officer needs to consider on a fireground, they serve as a great starting point for operations. If you address these points at every fire, your operations will run more smoothly.

Special thanks to Mike Lombardo, Commissioner (retired), Buffalo, NY, Fire Department for his "Five Points of Command."



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FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

FLASHOVER A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

Mike Lombardo, Commissioner (retired) — Buffalo, NY, Fire Department

On August 8, 1995, the Buffalo, NY, Fire Department received a report of heavy smoke in the area of Fillmore Avenue and Sycamore Street and a possible address of 866 Sycamore. An assignment of three engines, two trucks, one rescue, and a battalion chief were dispatched. Erroneous reports from civilians and the police department caused most of the companies to be delayed and arrive at the correct address of 866 Fillmore Avenue out of order.

My company, Truck 11, arrived first behind the battalion chief. Since I was the captain, the police and civilians informed me that people were trapped in the building. Having previously inspected the building, I was aware that the structure was a SRO (single-room occupancy). This information was relayed to the incident commander.

THE SEARCH

Entering the first floor, I encountered heavy smoke. A fire was located in the middle of the first floor; it involved two rooms and the hallway. Engine 3 stretched a hoseline to the hallway. I proceeded to the second floor with Lt. Jim Ziemer. We encountered heavy smoke and moderate heat conditions and started searching rooms off the hallway. Jim did the rooms on the right, and I searched the rooms on the left. As we finished searching the second room off the hall, we met in the hallway. I told him it was getting hot on the left.

As I entered the third room, I looked at my handlight; with it almost at my face, I could barely discern any light.

I started to search the room. On the right wall was a bed. After turning the corner, I found a window above the headboard. It was a small window with leaded glass. Farther down that wall was a second, larger window. I did not take either of those windows. I felt the room would have lit up if I had. I continued to search.

FIRE ALL AROUND ME

When I reached the next corner in the room, there was a low whoosh sound; it was like the noise a gas grill makes when gas is flowing for a while before it lights. At that time, my helmet blew off my head; I did not have the chin strap on. Fire was all around me. It was at the floor level all the way up to the ceiling. The thought went through my mind that this is what it will be like to die in a fire. I quickly disregarded that thought and started crawling for the door.

Finding the bed, I continued to the next wall and turned. I found that I was not out of the room but going into a small, movable closet. I backed up and found the doorway. At this time, I hollered for Jim. He was across the hall in a room that had not flashed. For a split second, the fire went out and everything turned black again. In the space of a second or two, the room reignited. The air I was breathing from my tank got noticeably hot at this time.

Also, at this time, I could hear the front windows being taken out. I headed for that noise, knowing that it was in

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FIRE TRAINING



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

FLASHOVER...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

I was asked if my gear allowed me to go farther than I should have. I know my gear allowed me to get out alive.

the direction of the stairs. The fire was pretty intense in the hallway; but once I got two or three feet from the door to the room, it was above my head—and I was not in it. I continued to the stairs and met Firefighter Tom Schmelzinger from my company. We “met” by my tumbling into him and going down the stairs to the landing. At the landing, a crew was coming up with a line. I told them Jim was still upstairs. They advanced into the hall, and Jim came down at that time. Tom helped me outside.

I received second- and third-degree burns to my head, face, and ears and first-degree burns to my shoulders and hands. My SCBA was okay. I was wearing a Nomex hood with an open web top; it was pretty well ruined. Most of my serious burns were at this area and at the point where the hood met my mask. The rest of my gear held up extremely well. The striping and lettering on my coat and pants were damaged, but the gear itself was okay.

REFLECTIONS

I have reflected on what happened many times, and some important thoughts come to mind:

- I still am glad I did not take the windows. I still feel the room would have lit up sooner and that the fire would not have gone out for the second or two that it did.
- There is a tremendous difference between being next to a fire and being in it. The heat and pain were excru-

ciating. For the second or two the fire went out, it was amazing how much cooler I felt.

- Some things still bother me: Before the room lit up, there was a substantial heat condition, but I have experienced much worse before. Early that week, we had a fire in a private dwelling where heat conditions were much worse.
- We had water problems at the fire, and this information was not relayed to us upstairs. The fire had traveled up an old dumbwaiter shaft that was covered over. The shaft was in the second-floor room that flashed over while I was in it, sending a tremendous amount of heat to the upper floor. Water was delayed because the first-in engine moved the rig a short distance to take a hydrant after the first line was stretched.
- I was asked if my gear allowed me to go farther than I should have. I know my gear allowed me to get out alive. As for where I was, I had reports from two sources—one, a police officer telling me people were trapped. I also knew the building was a rooming house; therefore, I think I would have pushed as far as I did with or without new-style turnout gear. Also, the heat before ignition was not that terrible. I think there is a direct correlation between pain and panic. As bad as I felt, I never got off my knees or lost control or the will to get out. Had I been burned around my legs or torso, I do not know if I could have kept functioning.
- I have had the chance to go back to the fire building. As nearly as I can tell, it took e about 15 to 25 seconds to get out of the fire, both in the room and in the hall. I traveled about 16 feet.

Article first appeared in Fire Engineering Magazine, August 1996.



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ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS

ENGINE COMPANY EMERGENCIES

The operation of hoselines in an offensive manner sometimes doesn't go as planned or practiced. Multiple things can happen while operating at a fire and the difference between success and failure on the fireground often hinges on how well a crew can recognize and overcome any issue they face. In adversity, a true testament to how well you have prepared and practiced might be the only thing that saves your life, your crews lives, and, most important, those we raised our right hand to swear to protect.

As we stretch and operate hoseline, success is totally dependent on the officer, crewmembers, and their ability to function as part of a team. Through proper training and operation of hoseline in training situations, skill mastery can be developed.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN

There are many things that can occur on the fireground that personnel need to prepare for ahead of the fire, some of which could be deadly if not addressed before the fire occurs. Water problems are probably the most important issue or concern we face as we operate hoseline at a fire. We can experience loss of water supply, failure of engine apparatus, failure of engine operators, loss of pressure, total loss of water, burst hose lengths, or having a door or other obstacle stop or reduce flow in the hoseline. *A few of the things that can occur are:*

- Fire flaring up behind the nozzle team because of unknown circumstance or wrap around fire situations.

- Previous areas that were knocked down reigniting.
- Flash fire or rapid fire progression and wind driven fires.

Additionally, you could stretch short or take too much hose, become lost and disoriented, and operate during a Mayday event. We've laid out an extensive list of things that can go bad for the Engine Company operating on a fire. In order to be prepared mentally and physically, we must frequently train realistically to ensure we are fully prepared for that "bad day" when one of the above mentioned situations occur.

WATER ISSUES

When we lose a water supply or don't have the water supply we assumed we would have on arrival, it shouldn't immediately signal the end of operations and loss of control. In the event a loss of water supply occurs during operations and booster water levels are low, then a true emergency exists. All water issues must be communicated over the radio. It is the responsibility of the Engine Operator to report water issues in an "urgent/emergency" communications procedure.

The proficient and prepared engine company officer and crew will know exactly how long their water supply will last with standard layouts and flows. If your tank water will last two and a half minutes and you lose your water supply at $\frac{1}{2}$ tank level because of supply hose failure or hydrant failure, then you know you have at least one minute of full flowing water to retreat or seek refuge.

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Along the same lines, it's important to not be afraid to start operations from tank water when water supplies are compromised on arrival. Just be mindful of how much water you have in your tank and know how long it will last using 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, and master stream devices. Loss of supply on the first-due engine with water compromise on the initial attack lines is why we emphasize individual water supply for each arriving engine to facilitate true redundancy in the system. If you are second due with a good water supply and the first due suffers loss of their supply with lines in operation, you have two options: stretch your own lines or, if the first due has lines in service, ensure you give the first due water from your engine to keep those first-due lines operating as you stretch the second line from your engine.

Apparatus Failure

Failure of the engine apparatus is a serious concern. The inability to place into pump or open valves because of mechanical failure does occur where it is not the fault of the operator. Recognizing and communicating failures in a timely manner is the most appropriate action. Operating with limited flow water from a pressurized source running through the pump can be better than nothing until help arrives.

Engine Operator Failure

Failure of the engine operator is a serious concern. Often this is a result of the "crazy" button in one's head that switches on when responding to a fire. This can be helped by continued training on all aspects of the operator job and ensuring all curveballs that could occur are repeatedly practiced. Gaining confidence and ensuring that the "crazy" drivers are given more attention will help solve

this problem. Everyone is human and mistakes will be made; it's important to ensure that your personnel operating the apparatus know how to recover.

Another issue that could occur with the operator, one that could occur with any member of your crew, is a medical or traumatic incident prohibiting operations from starting. Your operator could suffer a medical event or simply trip and break his leg. If this happens, what will you and your crew do to ensure water for fire attack? This is something that needs to be prepared for, and all personnel, regardless of if they ever aspire to become an engine operator, should know how the pump works and how to operate the apparatus and pump hoses. Throw a curveball every now and then to ensure everyone is capable of completing each other's tasks—especially when they are not expecting it!

Loss of Pressure

Loss of pressure can occur for a variety of reasons and must be recognized by the nozzle firefighter and others on the hose line. In order to ensure you know what proper nozzle pressure, reaction, and reach feel like, you must have repeatedly operated your standard hoses in training. You should also test the nozzle appropriately before beginning the attack. Don't just do quick bursts to clear air; open the line, assess pullback, and observe the stream. You should know if it's right.

Loss of pressure commonly occurs because of kinks that develop in the line, especially when too much hose is stretched or you have deployed the hose a great distance inside of a building around multiple obstacles. Hose can also get pinched and kinked around obstacles inside or outside, valves can be partially closed on accident, water supply can be interrupted, objects can fall on the hose, and doors can be wedged against the hose. This can cause a loss of pressure or a total loss of water. The main take-away from the issue with loss of pressure is that it's not an immediate retreat situation. It's important to recognize the issue, determine what's causing it, and proceed with caution. The nozzle firefighter should always recognize and notify the company officer of the situation.

Total Water Loss

Total loss of water is a more serious concern. That usually means something catastrophic has happened in the water system. The line could be completely severed or blocked by collapse or there could be mechanical failure of the apparatus. It's important that these issues are recog-



nized and communicated and orders to retreat are started by the company officer immediately. The line should be withdrawn so if water is restored in the system then streams can be operated for protection from fire progression. Unless the issue is determined and appropriately communicated to the nozzle team from a competent engine operator, the nozzle team should continue to exit, ensuring safety of the crew until final resolution of the issue can be determined.

Burst Hose Section

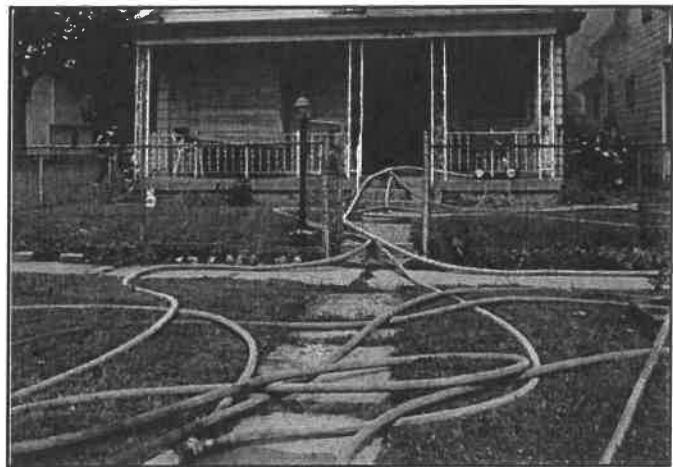
Often a burst section won't stop flow of water completely in small hoselines. The nozzle operator should recognize a reduction in pressure and communicate that to the officer. The orders to retreat to a last known safe area should be undertaken and the damaged section of hose replaced. Sometimes, it might be best to have a backup line take the position of the first hoseline if they are in position while the burst line is fixed.

If your line is deployed, it is probably a good idea to replace one bad section with two sections so you don't come up short as long hose lays sometimes stretch out the hose and make connections with water in the remaining hose more difficult. This should be something you practice as well, and it's a good idea to have some hose ready to be deployed as replacement in a donut roll so when rolled out you have both ends of the hose available for connection.

Door or Obstacle Stopping Water Flow

This is no different than the loss of pressure or total loss of water issue. A door or other obstacle, such as an open stair riser where the hose falls between the stair and the wall during deployment, a well hole that is too small, or a non-chocked door all can cause major problems. Often the hose has to be shut down, broken at a coupling back towards the apparatus, and then drained to remove the hose from the obstacle. In stairs, it's easier to remove the hose by simply shutting it down.

A door is much more difficult to open when the hose is holding it shut. If you are in a perilous situation and the door has stopped water flow then do whatever you need to do to get water to the nozzle. The best method to attack the situation is to begin prying up from the bottom of the door with a halligan to try to create a gap letting water pass through the hose. This is a true emergency on the fireground and, if in a dire situation, should be reason for transmission of a Mayday.



FIRE ISSUES

Wrap Around Fire

This situation can occur in certain types of occupancies where construction features lead to fire moving around rooms or other openings that aren't contained with doors, especially in newer open construction residential dwellings. It's important to recognize what is occurring, communicate within the crew, stop or slow your advance, and deal with the issue. You can alternate streams between spaces, attempt to shut doors or close openings if possible, or just summon an additional line to attack from the other area. It's important to control ventilation in this circumstance and ensure good, adequate gpm hoselines are operating. Additionally, the nozzle team should know how to rapidly redirect streams to areas directly behind them through practice in confined areas.

Areas Reigniting

This situation is similar to the wrap around fire issue; however, sometimes isn't as big of an issue as some would let on. As you advance on a well-involved fire that has overtaken a few compartments within the structure and your crew has knocked down several rooms before moving forward, sometimes small areas of fire will reignite or flare up. Often an overzealous additional crew or crewmember will not recognize that it's just a small smoldering fire.

If the fire in front of you isn't extinguished then efforts need to be maintained on still controlling that fire. If that fire is knocked down, the nozzle can be rapidly repositioned to further knock down the previous area. If the main hoseline must still combat active fire ahead of the

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team, then the backup or secondary hoseline should be called to the area previously knocked down.

Flash Fire or Imminent Flashover

When encountering very rapid fire changes, you must take immediate action. The best defense of this situation is to recognize it will occur from the onset of the incident. Signs of rapid fire progression are high heat, dark pressurized smoke from openings, free burning fire remote from the entrance, and visible fire that might appear over your head. Additionally, there may not be any fire that is visible.

The nozzle team should immediately flow water, fully open, at the ceiling to cool the environment and alternate between the ceiling and the main fire area as the nozzle team retreats or regroups. It's important to be able to operate the nozzle fully open while moving forward and in reverse.

Wind Driven Fires

These fires are nearly impossible to combat from an interior position. They can occur in any type of building, anywhere. Several well-known fire progression injuries and deaths have occurred in private dwellings where wind conditions played a factor in the outcomes. It's important to recognize the situation, seek refuge, and attempt extinguishment and knockdown from flanking positions with exterior streams or from adjacent spaces (small hole in a wall).

If you suspect a fire may be wind driven, especially in a large building where a door is controlling the fire area, then you can make a small hole in the door leading to the fire area to see the effects of fire and smoke coming from that hole. Smoke or fire coming out under pressure signifies a wind-driven condition and flanking actions need to be taken for fire control. (Underwriters Laboratories and the National Institute of Standards and Technology have a lot of in-depth information on wind driven fire events on their Web sites.)

Too Much Hose

If you are stretching to an area and have taken too much hose, you must know how to deal with that extra hose through advance practice. Too much hose in piles or attempted to be flaked out in confined areas will lead to kinks and loss of adequate water. Breaking hose and removing sections may be an option but could take some time.

Staging hose on the exterior, using open spaces on floors below, or even adjacent rooms will help stage the extra hose. Discipline and practice ahead of the fire in various occupancies will help to ensure that your crews are better prepared to estimate stretches and only deploy the hose they need for the fire situation.

Not Enough Hose

Often times, companies come up short with their stretch and can't actually reach the fire area. Sometimes this occurs and is recognized long before water is put into the hose; other times it is only realized when you cannot make it to the fire area. Before water is put in the hose, it's a relatively easy fix, assuming you are in a non-hostile environment. It is usually best to add hose closer to the nozzle so you don't have to restretch the entire length of hose.

Once water is in the hose and you can't reach the fire area, your actions require a little more practice and preparation for success. You should first call for more hose. It's important to keep more hose on your apparatus ready for rapid deployment. This could be from another hosebed or often a donut roll in a compartment. Unless you are going to shut down the line at the apparatus or you have break-apart nozzles, you should also call for a spare nozzle. You can attempt to isolate the fire area by shutting a door or removing a door remotely to cover the opening to the fire area. The repurposed door can also be used to bank water into the fire area. If you can keep the fire in check then keep applying water until the extra hose is ready. Once you have the additional hose, retreat to a safe refuge area, shut down the nozzle, remove the tip, add the needed lengths of hose and new nozzle, and redeploy the line to combat the fire.

OTHER SITUATIONS

Becoming Lost or Disoriented

You probably shouldn't become lost with a hoseline in your hand. However, if you haven't maintained orientation to where you are going inside a building, then you could technically be "lost." It seems common for people to get turned around in occupancies and think they are going in a direction they aren't because of a lack of preparation and training in these environments. If this occurred and you were separated from the line, you should know simple survival techniques such as air conservation, navigation and

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search techniques, forcible exit techniques, and how to call a Mayday.

If you happen to be on the hoseline or find the hoseline then begin crawling until you locate a coupling. Once the coupling is located, simply identify the direction of travel to the apparatus and crawl in that direction. You should be crawling towards the "male" coupling for exit. Ensure you feel each subsequent coupling to ensure you are still going in the right direction.

Mayday Events

These events are truly chaotic and require some of the greatest preparation and discipline on the fireground. Unless the engine company's line is involved in the Mayday event, then they should continue to focus their efforts on confining and extinguishing the fire. Lack of discipline will lead to engine company firefighters focusing on rescue operations and losing sight of the big picture—keeping the fire away from rescue efforts for the downed firefighter. This should always be the case, unless the Mayday directly involves a member of the nozzle team; then actions to immediately rectify the nozzle team emergency should be attempted. Everything gets better when the fire goes out!

NUMEROUS THREATS

As you can see, we have given a brief introduction to a great deal of circumstances that the engine company can encounter on the fireground, affecting their ability to combat the fire. Most of these situations are preventable with proper training, discipline, and focus on basic engine company skills.

In the event of an unfortunate situation, the officer and firefighters must be prepared to deal with the circumstance immediately to ensure the successful outcome and limit injury, death, and further property damage. Step out of your comfort zone, develop scenarios, practice "what if" situations, and throw a curveball at your crews periodically to keep them focused, disciplined, and on their toes.

Mike and Tom's article has also appeared in Fire Rescue Magazine.

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RESPONSE-BASED

On actual emergency responses, firefighters are required to properly use the apparatus and equipment to perform sets of skills that affect the outcome of the situation. The outcome, good or bad, is directly dependent on the quality of the fire department training aimed at dealing with the types of responses likely to be encountered on the streets.

Incorporating the above example of advancing an attack line, consider situation-based training for a single-family residence fire. The outcome of the fire will be affected by multiple companies performing multiple skills simultaneously! When was the last time your department actually trained to handle realistic responses?

BASIC AND ADVANCED CONTENT

You can never please all of the people all of the time – remember that when developing the training session.

What is important is that each session contains both basic and advanced material. It is inevitable that the firefighters in the group will all have different levels of experience so it's critical that the material addresses that. Have you ever attended a training session that was geared completely below your level of competence? Did the trainer do anything to try and include you in the session? How about the other extreme, have you ever sat through a session that was completely over your head?

Include both basic and advanced material in every training session. This will help address the training needs of everyone in the group. It will also help you, as the trainer, by reviewing all the material related to the subject – not just the basics. One thing is certain in training – if you go in unprepared then somebody will figure it out and your credibility will be immediately suspect!

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FIRE TRAINING



VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2016

FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

TRAINING & PREPARATION

Robert C. Bingham, Deputy Chief (retired) - Washington D.C. Fire Department

Preparation is very important to the success of our emergency operations. The aim of these guidelines is to improve the training and preparation levels in your fire department. CHECK AND DOUBLE-CHECK. Check your equipment faithfully and regularly, as if your life depends on it—because it does. When coming from home, this is a real problem. If you are unable to check your equipment before responding, check it on the fireground before using it. This is easier said than done. There is a lot of pressure to hurry and be the first one “on the knob” to put the fire out and save the day. Nobody wants to be known as the guy who is always outside fiddling with his mask. Training is the immediate answer to this problem, but it goes deeper than that—into people’s attitudes. Macho should never get

in the way of safety, but too often it does. Checking equipment is not glamorous but quite necessary. Finding out that your mask doesn’t work when you are advancing into a dark and smoke-filled building increases the already high danger factor. There is no excuse for it.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A ROUTINE CALL

We must keep alert, because all calls have the potential for injury or death for the responding firefighters. Most incidents that fire departments respond to are minor. Firefighters learn to expect certain types of problems in certain situations. The result is that we can become lax and develop a “smells and bells” mentality, thinking “It’s going to be another false automatic fire

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alarm," or "The report of smoke is probably just an odor." It is easy to fall into the rut of routine, that this call will be like similar calls. We must keep alert, because all calls have the potential for injury or death for the responding firefighters. In the words of one firefighter following a harrowing experience, "The fireground went from almost placid—nothing—to total terror within seconds." Several years ago a firefighter died after falling through a hole that had been covered by a piece of sheet metal. It was a room and contents fire in a store and had been knocked down. It appeared to be a routine fire. Even after he fell partially into the hole, it was not apparent that he was in serious trouble. It appeared to be a routine fall at a routine fire. "This was almost a routine fire. Just a room and contents. Almost routine," said Captain Gregory, District of Columbia Fire Department, following the death of Firefighter John Williams of Rescue Squad 1. Moral: Think the worst.

THE DOWNTOWN SNAKEBITE

There was no way any snake could exist there. The crew of Engine 16 was joking and laughing after they were dispatched for a report of a snakebite in McPherson Park, which is very small and surrounded by high-rise buildings. There was no way any snake could exist there, and a poisonous snake was out of the question. It was late at night, and it would be unusual to find a person in that commercial area, even if there were a snake. The joviality ended on arrival. There was indeed a snakebite victim who was in desperate need of assistance. The victim had broken into the reptile house at the zoo and stolen an exotic poisonous snake. He put the snake in a black plastic garbage bag and boarded a bus to take it home. Getting off the bus, he carried the bag with the snake over his shoulder. The snake struck through the bag and very nearly killed him. The hospital had to fly in an antidote from Africa to counteract the poison.

THE ROUTINE WATER PROBLEM

On a dark and stormy night, I was dispatched to investigate a report of water leaking from a roof. These are usually routine service calls for a battalion chief. On arrival, there was about six inches of water on the roof of the apartment house. The truck company reported that water was in many apartments and that the police on the scene were starting to evacuate the top floor. It was then that I suddenly realized that I wasn't working on a water leak

but on a potential collapse hazard and mass-casualty incident. I called for some help. We muddled through, and no one was hurt. Moral: Take all calls seriously—nobody ever calls the fire department because everything is all right. Get out of the "this is minor" mentality and figure out what could happen.

DON'T BE LAX

In the firefighting business, we pride ourselves on getting out of the station quickly and getting to the scene as soon as possible. However, when we get to the scene, unless a fire is obvious, we generally investigate. In the army, you often have to hurry up and then wait. Too often in the fire service, we play "Hurry up, then investigate." This often means giving little or no thought to a water supply, an attack line, SCBA, or full personal protective equipment (PPE). Usually, a few firefighters will go in, prepared to find nothing, and the rest will wait outside expecting to go home. Looking for a fire when you are not prepared is like leaving your bear gun in the truck and going out to look for the bear. If you find the bear, you have to go back to the truck for the gun. When looking for a bear, always take your gun.

WHAT HAPPENS IF IT IS A FIRE?

The only thing that unprepared firefighters are ready for is finding little or nothing and returning to the station. When the ho-hum investigation uncovers a real fire, panic often follows, and there is a lot of yelling, screaming, and trying to play catch up. Remember that the fire was supposed to be there; that's why we were called. The problem is that in some fire departments, there are two modes: the "This is another nothing incident," and "Oh, God, this is a fire!" The Oh, God operation isn't pretty or predictable. The operation goes downhill pretty fast, and often important things are overlooked. Operations that start badly seldom end well. The philosophy of every member responding should be, "This is serious business—we are going to a fire." Be prepared. Unfortunately, lazy firefighters often get away with it because most fires aren't serious, so bad habits can be reinforced. Complacency kills.

A BUNGLED FIREGROUND

We have all been to fires such as the one where nothing seems to go right. The first engine went on the scene of a fire in a garden apartment. The crew was screaming that

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

TRAINING & PREPARATION...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



fire was showing and that they needed an immediate back-up line. Why all the screaming? There was supposed to be a fire. That's the reason they were dispatched there, and backup lines should be SOP. All efforts went into extinguishing the fire, located on the second floor of a three-story garden apartment. There was very little ventilation and no exposure coverage. What else is new? Calling for help was slow and piecemeal. The original dispatch got three engines, a truck, and a chief. It was obvious that they were going to need a lot of help quickly. What they got was a little help slowly. Calling for help went like this: 10 minutes into the incident, give me two more engines; later, another engine; then another truck, followed by another request for an engine and truck, followed by another engine. Help was called for by bits and pieces over the next hour. There was no staging, and no companies were assigned to sectors. As a result, the incident commander was overwhelmed with radio traffic. When the visible flames were knocked down, the firefighters thought that the fire was over, and there was a lull in communications. Then all hell broke loose. There were cries of fire in the attic, one floor above the fire. Then they were screaming for hoselines to the roof. You don't want to know what they did with the lines. Finally, a company was assigned to cover the exposure in the attached building next door, which had not been checked. Soon they were screaming that they found heavy smoke in the exposure and that they needed lines and hooks. There never were any organized searches, nor was there a critique or post-incident analysis. Doctors bury their mistakes; too often we just don't talk about ours. The incident commander said that he thought that the fire went pretty well. We have all been to fires like this one and can relate to some of the mistakes made. They are all common errors that

haunt us regularly. In this age of the incident command system, command, and communications (the radios used were state-of-the-art, 800-frequency radios), you would think that fires would not go this badly, but they sometimes do. The main reason these bungled fires continue to happen is that we often skate along doing the bare minimum on our routine calls and when we have serious fires, our bad habits come back to haunt us.

THE FREE-WHEEL SYSTEM

Twenty years ago, I was a newly assigned lieutenant with Engine 18, a busy company in the Capitol Hill area. In those days we often free-wheeled, which was normal in many fire departments during that era. This meant that an engine company on the fireground could often do pretty much what it wanted, unless a chief told it otherwise. It often wasn't a very efficient system, but it was a hell of a lot of fun and fostered competitiveness between the engine companies. It was an "If you snooze, you lose" system that rewarded efficiency.

THE ATTACK PLAN

Engine 18 was my first engine command, and I wanted to do my best to avoid some of the mistakes I had seen other officers make. My game plan was simple: Whenever we responded to a reported structure fire, we operated as if we were the only engine company responding and that it was a working fire. This meant that we laid supply lines and attack lines to the reported fire area and used full PPE, including SCBA. We were going to arrive at every incident fully prepared to do battle with the red devil. The hard part was explaining this plan to my incredulous troops. I quickly became the Captain Queeg of the Seventh Battalion. I considered the new rank a promotion. The pumper man stopped talking to me. After a few weeks, just about the time my relations with the troops were at the breaking point, we caught a fire that changed everything.

THE FIRE

The fire was reported in the basement of a high-rise apartment. We were the third-due engine company. On arrival, nothing was showing, the first engine and truck were investigating, and the other companies were hanging around outside. They watched with great amusement as Captain Queeg and Engine 18 advanced an attack line into the building and down the stairs. When we got to the first



landing, we found smoke, and the first companies passed us as they bailed out of the basement in a near-panic on their way out to get ready for the fire. We simply continued down the stairs and calmly extinguished the fire, which was the reason we were all sent there in the first place.

PREPARATION PAYS

That was a turning point in my relations with the crew of Engine 18, and we continued our aggressive tactics. Over the next few years, we caught many fires, a number of which were stolen from less-prepared companies. We rapidly developed a reputation for being supermen. We started to hear stories that some of the other companies were so gun-shy of us that they were worried about our stealing their fires, even when we weren't there. The truth is that we were not any better firefighters than the others; the secret was that we were simply more prepared than they were. A successful major league baseball pitcher said once he doesn't "out-ability" everybody else; he just out-smarts them because he is prepared. There is a saying in sports: "The will to win is not enough—you need to have the will to be prepared to win." Fire operations are similar. The key to effective operations: Be prepared! A major positive spinoff of the "always prepared" approach was that the basics of engine company operations became second nature to us. We avoided most of the common errors that cause problems (e.g., pulling the wrong attack line, tangling or snagging lines, charging the wrong line, having problems masking or getting water at the right time and pressure). We became a well-oiled team and put out a lot of fires with few errors. We avoided a common fire-ground disease—being rusty. We were the opposite—we were prepared and treated every run the same: lay out, mask up, and stretch in.

TRAINING

Training is an important part of being prepared. The following observations are offered as ideas that you may be able to use to improve training in your fire department. Too often, training has a bad reputation in the fire service. Mention training, and some will roll their eyes, recalling boredom, uncomfortable sessions, and being read to. We have a new generation of firefighters to train. The MTV generation doesn't want Lawrence Welk instruction. Teaching needs to catch up with the times.

Too often, training has a bad reputation in the fire service. Mention training, and some will roll their eyes, recalling boredom, uncomfortable sessions, and being read to. We have a new generation of firefighters to train. The MTV generation doesn't want Lawrence Welk instruction. Teaching needs to catch up with the times.

THE KEY TO TRAINING

The key to fire service training is choosing important subjects taught by good instructors and actively involving everyone in the learning process. Training must be practical and relate to the real world. Nobody is going to fall asleep during a drill on finding lost firefighters. They fall asleep during classes when the instructor reads them the department's bylaws or from Improved Management Techniques Through Advanced Programming. The fire service has become so complex that trying to keep up with all the different aspects can be overwhelming. We should focus on firefighting basics such as using SCBA, ensuring that everyone can get water in the attack line, and learning the layout of our jurisdiction. You can't do anything if you can't get there. Train on the problem areas in your department, and don't take anything for granted. Following a serious failure to get water at a fire, a major fire department sent several pump operators to a retraining session because of their shortcomings. Assume nothing. Visuals are important. Watching videos of your own or other departments' fires can be very interesting and productive. Use an experienced moderator who can stop the tape periodically to discuss what went right or wrong. Replay important scenes following the discussion to reinforce the lessons. When possible, choose instructors who love the subject that they are teaching. When instructors are mandated to drill in areas in which they are not comfortable, training often suffers. Instructors should be chosen by their expertise, not their rank. Reach out to people in other departments or from other shifts. Using different instructors keeps training fresh. Instructors should use less lecture and more class participation. They should ask probing questions reflecting real-life situations to stir the students' minds. If the instructor is the only one talking, the training session is dead. If you show the students how to do something, they will pay attention; but the real learning takes place when they actually do it. Firefighters learn by doing.

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

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Remember, we play the game the way we practice, and we set the stage for the big incidents at the little ones. Training is vital, and the key to fire service training is choosing important subjects and actively involving everyone in the learning process.

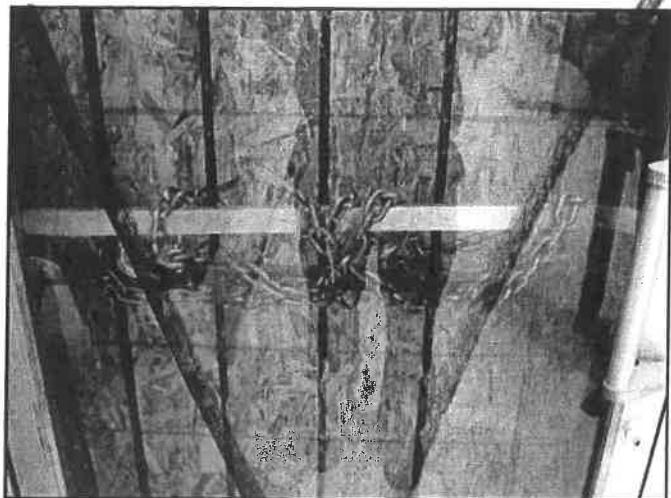
This dynamic learning avoids the "I have to sit through this to get my ticket punched" mentality. Industry has found it cheaper to send people on retreats, to learn in a completely different environment. Most fire departments lack the resources for this, but variety and interest can be added by getting out of the fire stations. Get out and look over the railyard. Arrange for a mutual-aid disaster drill with your neighboring fire departments. Go to the junk-yard to cut up cars; hold a high-rise drill simulating a fire during hours when the building is closed. You get the idea—a good instructor is limited only by his imagination. Don't just talk about how to do things—do them. Every run is a training session. Minor incidents are training grounds for major incidents. Try to do the basics properly on each run; don't get careless or sloppy. After incidents, discuss what happened and how things could be improved.

BE PREPARED!

Take all calls seriously and be prepared, because they all have the potential for injury or death. There is no such thing as a routine call. You never know what you will find when you arrive at the emergency scene. When fire companies take responses seriously and are prepared, fire-ground operations will be smoother. Remember, we play the game the way we practice, and we set the stage for the big incidents at the little ones. Training is vital, and the key to fire service training is choosing important subjects and actively involving everyone in the learning process.



DOOR SIZE-UP...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7



Door # 3

Lastly we have an aluminum stile storefront door that has become a blockade. This was a side entrance of the building and is obviously rarely used, if at all. This would be easy to identify unless smoke had stained the windows, but it shouldn't take us long to see this one isn't a great choice. Could we get through these doors?....Sure we could eventually, but on these particular buildings it would not have been the best choice, and it means we failed to notice key size up points that would have clued us in to their potential difficulty.

Thanks goes out to our fellow "South Siders" from Engine Co 11 for some of the photos and insight for this post.

**VISIT RYAN'S SITE AT:
WWW.IRONANDLADDERS.COM**

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FIRE TRAINING



VOLUME 20 ♦ ISSUE 2 ♦ FEBRUARY 2016

FIREGROUND SURVIVAL

SAFER FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

Mike Lombardo, Chief (retired) — Buffalo, NY, Fire Department

REDUCING LINE OF DUTY DEATHS THROUGH TRAINING & DISCIPLINE

The loss of firefighters in America is staggering, intolerable and most of all tragic for families and peers. The loss of 115 firefighters in 2007 is an increase of 9 from the 106 deaths in 2006. According to the US Fire Administration 10% to 20% of these fatalities are defined under the Hometown Heroes Act. The law was signed in 2003 the Hometown Heroes Act establishes a statutory presumption that public safety officers who die from a heart attack or stroke following a non-routine stressful or strenuous physical public safety activity or training, died in the line of duty for benefit purposes. The adoption of

this Bill has increased our LODD's and should be taken into account in our efforts to stem this terrible tide. This is obviously a multi-faceted problem that needs attention from all involved to arrive at a better outcome. We strive to reach a goal of 0 firefighter deaths; this goal however is unattainable in the foreseeable future. There always has been and always will be an element of danger in firefighting. There are incidents that involve firefighters being sent into very dangerous circumstances involving great possibility of injury or death. These instances are rare but are vital

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**SAFER FIREGROUND OPS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

to save life, at times many lives. Every year in this country firefighters die in the process of saving life, we should never minimize this sacrifice.

The City of Buffalo (NY) Fire Department has a proud history dating back to 1880 as a fully career fire department. Buffalo is a poor city; in fact according to the US Census in 2006 Buffalo was the 2nd poorest large city in America. This level of poverty brings with it a high demand for service from the fire department. There are over 15,000 vacant buildings in Buffalo, New York these are often the target of arsonists and vandals. In 2006 the Buffalo Fire Department responded to 1,543 serious working structural fires. The following year was not much better at 1,298. The Buffalo Fire Department has suffered the loss of 113 firefighters since its establishment as a fully career fire department more than 125 years ago. Eighteen of those firefighters have died since I was appointed to the department in 1983; I, myself, worked at fires where 10 of those men were killed, 5 firefighters at a warehouse explosion, 2 in a fire and collapse at a deli in a 2 story brick building, plus 3 single LODD incidents. These were a warehouse fire where a wall collapsed killing a Lieutenant, a house fire where an acting Battalion Chief died from smoke inhalation, and a house fire where a young firefighter burned to death. Having operated at the scene where 10 of those men died has really driven me to be safer and to create a safer environment for my crews so we can all go home.

We in Buffalo have gotten better. The BFD lost two members in 2009 at the deli fire; these were the first fireground deaths since 1997. However, three deaths have occurred since then. In 2005 we lost a member fighting in Iraq, and his death was a tremendous loss to our department, although technically not a LODD. A Truck Company Lieutenant succumbed to cancer that was duty related in 2005. In February 2006 a firefighter who had been injured in 1995, and who had remained in a coma for 10 years, passed away. This firefighter "woke up" after ten years and spent some 36 hours communicating with his family and friends. He then slowly slipped back into unconsciousness and died in a coma 10 months later.

The implementation of numerous measures, such as the assigning of accountability officers, radios for all assigned positions, and increased training in all aspects of the job are some of the reasons we have a safer department. The reason I mention all of these issues dealing with my department and myself is to provide some insight into the human side of this issue, and some personal perspective.

Many people are involved in writing and dealing with the LODD problem in the American Fire Service, but we don't want to create a cottage industry based on LODD. As I stated earlier, we cannot forget the tremendous sacrifice that these firefighters and their families have made for us all.

There are two major areas that I think can have the most impact on firefighter survivability and safety. Those are discipline and training.

DISCIPLINE

We often talk about the "love for the job," dedication, commitment, etc. These are very important assets to strive for across a department. However if any of these attributes are missing in any member it is good to have instilled a solid discipline program in a department. We look at the causes of death for firefighters and see that fully 25% involve vehicle response. Having a mandatory seatbelt use rule and mandatory procedures for backing up apparatus can dramatically reduce these numbers. When I started my career I was one of the guys that did not wear a seatbelt, I now always do. Disciplined firefighters who operate within these procedures are going to be much safer than those who will "love" to wear seatbelts.

Many of the reasons firefighters die involve things we can do something about. We can avert those risks; we can avert them all the time. It does not matter what the incident that we are responding to or operating at involves but rather the fact that we are going to not expose ourselves to controllable risk. This is not "*risk benefit analysis*" but rather "*risk aversion*." I am going to wear my seatbelt when I am responding to an automatic alarm and when I am responding to a well involved fully occupied orphanage fire.

Much has been discussed regarding new generation firefighters, in both their training and motivation. We try today to explain the reason for rules and regulations. This



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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

SAFER FIREGROUND OPS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

is good as our new firefighters are intelligent and willing to learn. However, this does not release us from having rules, regulations, and procedures. Many departments have replaced operating procedures with operating guidelines; I fully understand the rationale for this. There are segments of our operations, though, which do need clear-cut direction. Standard Operating Procedures are used in our department, as are Department Orders. More importantly we need a system in place to instill discipline (starting in recruit school) and to have a known set of consequences when rules, regulations and procedures are not met.

Earlier I mentioned risk aversion and risk benefit analysis. For much of what we do in the fire service, risk aversion works. If we wear seatbelts every time, if we wear SCBA during any exposure to smoke, if we practice good communication on the fireground with our partners and our commanders, we will lower our risk of injury and death. We will do this regardless of the incident that we are responding/operating at. There are times that we truly have to weigh the outcome of what we are going to do (risk-benefit). As Incident Commander, we may have to order people into situations that are extremely critical and may result in injury or death of a firefighter, but this hopefully would be an extremely rare event. A company officer or firefighter may be in a situation where operating a hose line in very dangerous conditions to hold a position for a much larger benefit, i.e. holding a stairwell door in a high-rise fire so hundreds of civilians can escape. These heroic and courageous examples involve discipline as much as the mundane do. Instilling that early in a career and throughout the organization is vital to the success and overall safety of a fire department.

TRAINING

The area that I feel has the most impact on firefighter safety and survivability is training. I am going to make a statement that will rankle many firefighters. Firefighters individually do not perform structural firefighting duties very often. Even in very busy departments the average individual firefighter does not engage in structural firefighting typically more than once a week. Much has been made of our business regarding how technical it has become. It has, and we are involved in many areas of emergency response today that require large amounts of higher-level training. However, the vast majority of firefighter deaths still involve *common* fireground incidents, medical issues and events related to response. This sim-



plicity extends beyond firefighters, 81% of all civilian fire fatalities involve residential fires. In other words, people die in ones and twos in their own home. In my belief we cannot emphasize, nor do we practice, basic fire training enough.

I like to use the analogy with my troops of sports teams. Buffalo is home to the almost 4 time Super Bowl Champion Buffalo Bills and the Buffalo Sabres of the NHL. If we look at a professional football player's career we see the training and practice that has brought that individual to this pinnacle. How many tackles has a defensive linebacker made before ever stepping out onto the field of an NFL stadium? How much conditioning has taken place, to get that individual to the NFL? I am not saying that we can or should demand this level of activity from firefighters but we can look at it in a simpler way. The Buffalo Sabres play 82 hockey games in the regular season, what do they do in between games? They practice playing hockey. As firefighters we need to practice our most basic skills and constantly learn and update our knowledge.

As I stated earlier an individual firefighter may not be engaged in actual combat firefighting very often. I think the Buffalo Fire Department is quite busy and yet few of our firefighters fight more than a serious fire or two every week. I am sure there are departments where a firefighter could go for months and not engage in fire combat. My solution is training, everyday, and learning everyday. I am not talking about only "new" or mandated subjects (is it odd that things like blood borne pathogen training is man-



dated each year but hose line training is not) but rather the basics. If every time an engine company works a 24 hour shift they practice stretching a line a number of things will happen; 1 - they will be good at stretching a hose line, 2 - they will not be fat (guilty, I sit behind a desk). If the ladder company crew practices multiple times laddering by raising a 35' and 16' ladder to a roof and opening the roof (if they are fortunate enough to have a facility) we will see the same results. On our next shift if those crews switch apparatus and assignment for training think of the benefits. Fully 50% of firefighter fatalities are medical in nature this physical activity will strengthen the heart and produce a safer firefighter. In Buffalo, since 2001, we have provided extensive workout equipment along with peer fitness trainers. Training as we fight will always be better than simple workouts if for no other reason than the motor muscle and task repetition will increase our effectiveness.

Our training must mirror our fire environment. Training firefighters in fire behavior awareness and basic building construction and layout is a huge step towards keeping them safe. Fatality after fatality in the fire service involves firefighters who become lost and disoriented inside buildings. More often than not this involves firefighters caught in changing fire conditions. Many firefighters have fought their way into a building with heavy fire, the situation that is much more dangerous is the building with few signs of fire showing, but after firefighters have entered conditions rapidly deteriorate. We see many times over examples of this situation killing firefighters. The firefighter fatalities in Worcester MA, Keokuk IA, Charleston SC, and here in Buffalo have all involved rapidly changing fire conditions.

In the past I have taught both in my department as well as across the US & Canada. I can not tell you the number of times where an interested, motivated, firefighter could recite to me the hazard classes from the *Emergency Response Guidebook* but has no knowledge of the nuances of buildings in his or her district. I refer here not only to the basic construction features but also basic layouts of buildings by type in a district or response area or city. Again also very basic training, but how often after recruit school do firefighters perform basic search and maneuvering drills under blackout conditions. What training does a firefighter have involving fire behavior and its effects on the building they operate in and more importantly the effect on that firefighter? The examples where I feel we fall short in training are numerous, and they are also systemic to a larger problem that is often at a level above the



local fire department. We also have to ask ourselves if training being provided is relevant. If after a 5 plus month recruit school we see recruits being told "that was fine in school but we do it different out in the field." If this is valid it is fine for a couple items but when we reach the point of explaining things like this dozens of times we need to look at the validity of our training program. I remember over the years seeing things in National publications that were ridiculous.

As an example here are some that describe the way of identifying that a room has been searched:

- **Close the door?** *So as a new Firefighter if I find a closed door I don't need to search that room?*
- **Mark the door with chalk?** *Who has chalk in their gear and can you write notes to each other?*
- **Turn the mattress in a U?** *I have a California king at home; come on over try your best?*

There are many examples that we see all the time that are written and we just seem to accept them. We need to challenge those things.

Our training also fails Firefighters in intensity and duration. I know a Firefighter who spent 26 weeks in recruit school and was only in the burn building 4 times. The fire is often a small amount of hay and the recruit constantly hears "don't put that out" as he or she gets near the fire with the hoseline. This is terrible, a Firefighters' first fire should not be their first fire, it should occur mul-

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

SAFER FIREGROUND OPS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

A strong discipline system as well as a focused, ongoing, and robust training program will contribute to a safer fire service. These elements of our profession need to be embraced by recruits, seasoned firefighters, company level officers, command officers, and fire chiefs to be successful. Nothing alone will solve the problem of firefighter fatalities, but training and discipline programs implemented and practiced will save lives.

tiple times in recruit school and be as close to an actual fire as possible. Many of our training facilities lack the ability to have true live fire in them and consequently we fail our new recruits as well as providing any realistic training for our in service Firefighters. The US Military still shoots live ammunition above Marines and Soldiers heads in training. We absolutely have to train like we fight!

Many firefighters in this country are afforded little or no facilities for training. Large counties across the US do not have a training facility of any kind. Often at the state level the training is concentrated at the incident management or technical level that is judged to be unavailable in the local jurisdiction. Programs on "Rigging for Structural Collapse," ICS 400, or "Underwater Dive Operations" are great, but do nothing to aid in the training of local firefighters in a rural county that have no training center. We cannot forget that a department's prime mission is to save life and property, and we learn from the US Fire Administration that most likely that mission will involve fire in 1 & 2 family homes. This likely will be the biggest threat to department members as well as the citizens. As I stated before, we must guide our training by what we as departments face everyday.

For a number of years now the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has been conducting investigations into firefighter line of duty deaths. The reports that are generated are helpful for fire departments nationwide to see what areas come up in incidents repeatedly. The reports should also be looked at for information that may not be so evident. An example in one report made passing mention of the first hose line being used at a fatal fire to be 400' of 1½" hose. This situation was not identified as a problem in the report, the use of a 400' hose line of that diameter would require, depending on the flow, at a minimum 150 to over 200 pounds pressure to overcome the friction loss. This coupled with a need for 100 pounds nozzle pressure would combine to require 250 to 300+ pounds pressure at the fire pump. This is a tremendously high pressure and was probably not supplied. This is a very basic action, the stretching and proper supply of the first hose line. Although not cited in

the report this action could very well have contributed to the problem. Most actions in the NIOSH reports refer to items that can be tied directly to an OSHA/NFPA standard. This is why it is crucial to look at these reports and see if there are training issues that may not be featured.

At the federal level we also have the National Fire Academy, certainly a welcome addition to fire training for America's firefighters. The training at the NFA is almost exclusively classroom training focused at upper level operational and management functions of the fire service. Again this is needed good training but does not address the thousands of firefighters who have no access to good physical training facilities. If we contrast this to the United Kingdom's Fire Service College at Moreton-In-Marsh England we see a facility that is overwhelmingly superior to almost anything that is provided by the US Government. At the Fire Service College there are physical facilities replicating everything from a private dwelling to high-rise structures, wide body aircraft to ships and subways. Facilities like this are not available to most firefighters in America. The thought also comes up that with technology today we could train many more firefighters in NFA Programs in the virtual classroom rather than traveling from New Mexico, or Oregon etc. to Emmitsburg for a classroom presentation. Our NFA needs more support.

There needs to be a commitment from all levels of government to fire service training. I doubt that the FBI academy ever considered an old college as its full service campus. This commitment needs to include funding so firefighters can be trained locally with useful facilities. At the state level and federal level their needs to be advanced training involving both classroom and physical hands-on programs.

A strong discipline system as well as a focused, ongoing, and robust training program will contribute to a safer fire service. These elements of our profession need to be embraced by recruits, seasoned firefighters, company level officers, command officers, and fire chiefs to be successful. Nothing alone will solve the problem of firefighter fatalities, but training and discipline programs implemented and practiced will save lives.



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

TRUCK COMPANY OPERATIONS

PROTECTING THE SEARCH

Josh Materi – Seattle, WA, Fire Department

Door Control

An aggressive search performed before or simultaneously with fire attack is the most effective way to save lives. Truck companies must quickly search around, behind, and above any fire in a residential occupancy if trapped or overcome victims are to be saved. In order to conduct a safe and effective search the truck company should be supported with a coordinated fire attack. In addition, the truck company should use available doors to confine the fire, protect the search from the fire, and permit ventilation, all to improve search conditions.

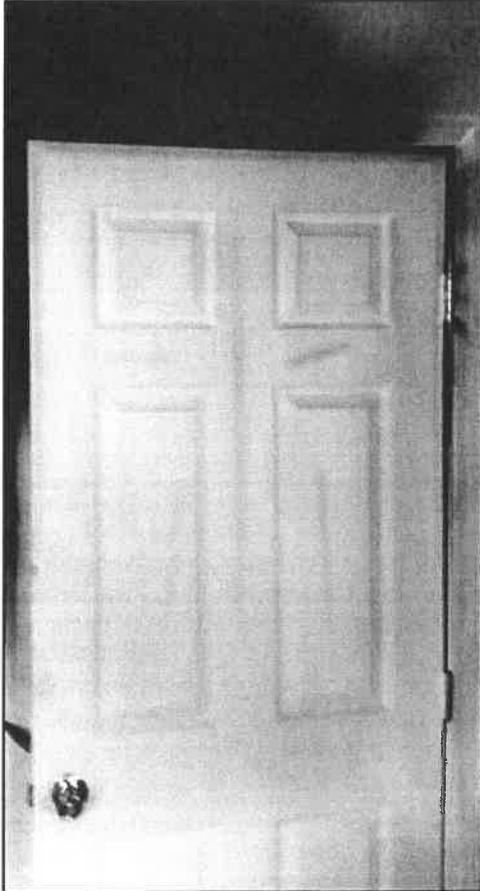
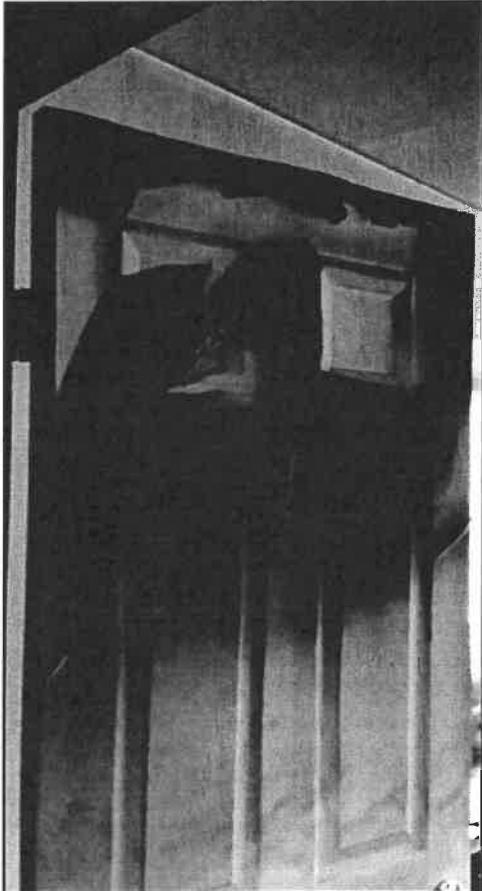
Engine companies understand the importance of door control. When stretching dry hose lines to the fire area, all doors that the line passes through are chocked open to ensure that it will not get kinked under a door, restricting water flow. Once the line has been charged and bled the door leading into the fire area is also chocked open to prevent the line from hanging up and hindering the advance. For Engine companies door control means chocking doors so that they remain open.

Door control has a different meaning for truck companies. Closing doors—and keeping them shut—may confine a fire to a single room or apartment, protect members who are searching in a room adjacent to or above a fire, and can permit local ventilation to improve the speed and effectiveness of the search without providing additional air to the fire. For truck companies, door control is used as a form of confinement.

All members of the truck company, regardless of assignment, must continually consider ventilation and how their actions could affect the fire. Anytime a member opens a door or vents a window, they need to consider the impact this ventilation will have on the fire, trapped occupants, and members operating inside. Uncoordinated ventilation provides additional air to the fire causing rapid fire growth and worsening conditions which may result in companies having to abandon the search for occupants.

The door to the fire area must be controlled and kept closed. Unless a charged line is in position and ready to advance to the seat of the fire, the front door of the apartment or dwelling needs to be kept closed to reduce the amount of air available to the fire and prevent drawing the fire towards the primary entry point. If the door to the fire area has been left open by fleeing occupants the truck company should close it to prevent the fire from extending into the public hall or up the stairs. On the other hand, if the door to the fire area is locked, the members conducting forcible entry must force entry while ensuring the door remains intact, and capable of closing and confining the fire. Opening the door to the fire area is one of the most significant events at any fire and must be carefully coordinated and controlled.

The inside teams number one priority is to locate and confine the fire—prior to searching for victims. A six foot hook and pump-can may be needed to push fire back and close the door if conditions are severe. If a closed door is beginning to fail due to the fire, all means available



should be used to keep the fire contained.

Cooling a burning door with the pump-can or covering it with another door are two options. Members cooling or manipulating damaged doors must use caution to prevent a door from falling apart. Many severely burnt doors are still effective at limiting heat from escaping and air flowing towards the fire. If you can get control of the door, leave the member with the pump-can at the door to monitor it since all doors have an expiration date, some fail faster than others. Controlling the door may be the difference between the engine company being able to stretch dry out of the stairwell, the primary search being completed past the fire room, and/or having to wait for the engine company to advance a charged line from the floor below before searching.

If fire conditions permit the search team to enter the fire area before a charged hose line is in place, the door should be closed after entry and controlled to prevent it from accidentally or prematurely opening. Prevent the door from locking behind you by either throwing the bolt of the dead bolt preventing the door from closing or by

placing a latch strap on both knobs. After entering the fire area the search team should locate and confine or control the fire, if possible, before beginning to search for life. If the fire cannot be located or controlled by the search team, no ventilation of the fire area should be performed. Any ventilation of the fire area may contribute to a rapidly worsening fire conditions endangering the search team and preventing further search. Maintaining control of the door to the fire area and preventing air from reaching the fire are essential to ensuring the safety of the search team as well as completing the search.

Interior doors, particularly bedroom doors, should be shut and kept closed when searching adjacent to or above the fire. Closing interior doors when searching isolates trapped victims from the fire, creates an area of refuge for the search team, and

permits isolated, room specific, ventilation without providing additional air to the fire. Bedroom doors should be quickly closed by the search team, kept closed during the search while the windows are utilized for ventilation of this specific room.

Ventilating windows as the search progresses is very effective if they are isolated from the fire by a closed door. Ventilating windows while searching can provide clean air to victims, improve visibility, create emergency egress points, allow members operating on the exterior to support the search team with ladders, and maintain accountability. Although ventilating windows while searching has many advantages, members must not ventilate a window if it is not isolated from the fire, an uncontrolled fire is located directly below the window, or fire has already extended into the room. Once an isolated window has been vented, the rooms interior door must be kept closed until the fire is under control.

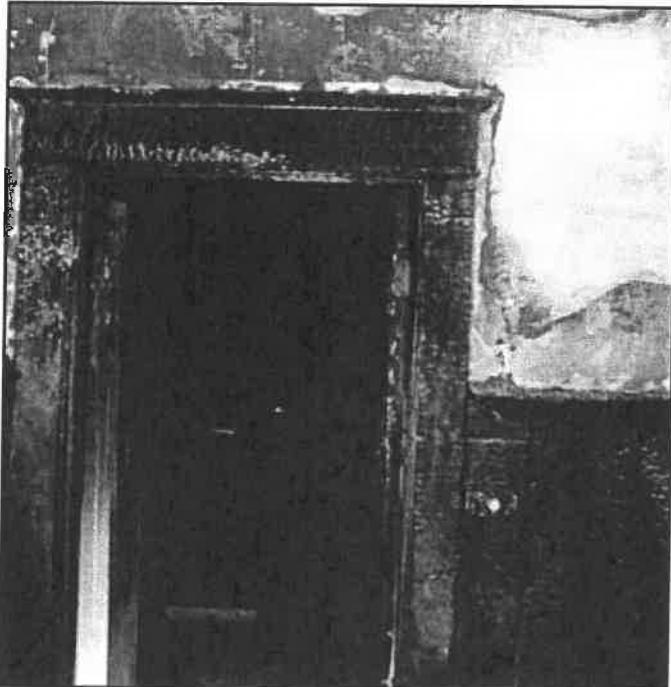
A primary responsibility of the truck company outside team at residential fires is often Vent-Enter-Search (VES). Rooms located above or behind the fire frequently can

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

PROTECTING THE SEARCH...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13



only be searched in a timely manner through exterior windows. When selecting windows for VES, members should consider what the room is used for as well as the probability that it has an interior door. Rooms without interior doors cannot be isolated from the fire and venting the window will likely worsen conditions and draw fire to the window. Closing the interior door is critical for the safety of any member conducting VES as well as allowing an effective search.

Door control is one of the most important tasks the truck company is responsible for. The top priority at most fires is to locate the fire and close the door. Door failure, doors with transoms, a missing door or being unable to close a door due to debris are all critical factors that may inhibit your search and the entire fireground. If you have the door, use it to your advantage and protect yourself, the search, and any occupants. Close the door.

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COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

COMPANY OFFICER SKILLS & ABILITIES!

John Salka, Battalion Chief (retired) — FDNY

Of all the people in the fire service, company officers hold one of the most important and influential positions. Their impact on the quality of operations is dramatic and the things that they do or don't do have a huge effect on life in both the firehouse and on the fireground. So what are the important skills and abilities for fire service company officers to possess and practice?

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is one of the most valuable possessions of the company officer. Know what is going on in the department, in the firehouse, and among your firefighters. Knowledge of the department's standard operating procedures and administrative policies are vital to an effective company officer. Now, nobody can know everything and company officers are no exception. However, they must be very well versed on the duties and operations of the fire company where they work. Even if you don't know everything, you still should be the most knowledgeable member of your shift or company. When firefighters call their officer or knock on the office door with a question, they are counting on the officer to come through for them. You need to be familiar with engine company operations, truck tactics, or whatever work it is that your company is charged with performing. The officer must also know the department's administrative procedures and policies and any other process that a member of their crew may need to follow.

ORGANIZATION

Organization is another skill that is vital for company officers. Nothing is more impressive than walking into the company office to talk with the officer and seeing a neat, clean, squared away office—a desk that is not cluttered with paperwork and envelopes, a trash can that is not overflowing with debris, and a bunk that has been made and not strewn with clothing, piles of papers, books, etc. An organized company officer often has a "to do" list on the desk with several items checked off and several others coming up as the next activity for the day. Completed reports, neatly typed and signed, are stacked at the corner of the desk or piled in the "outgoing papers" basket. A properly arranged office conveys an organized atmosphere. The officer's riding position on the apparatus should also reflect a vision of organization. PPE should be placed strategically at the cab and the officer's riding position should be ready for the next response.

TEAM PLAYER

Officers must be team players and be loyal to both their superiors and subordinates. Company officers are in a unique position in that they must be loyal both up and down the chain of command. This may seem like a conflict but a good officer can get it done with ease. Officers should always be considering and providing for their firefighters' comfort, safety, and well-being, but they must

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

SKILLS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Of all the people in the fire service, company officers hold one of the most important and influential positions. Their impact on the quality of operations is dramatic and the things that they do or don't do have a huge effect on life in both the firehouse and on the fireground.

also remember that they are agents of the department and of their superiors. Taking care of and providing for the firefighters does not mean saying yes to every request. It means providing for their needs, but maybe not their wants. Keeping their priorities in order will allow the officer to keep the goals of the department out front while handling the firefighters' needs as well. Remembering the order of priorities as "the mission, the men, and me" should keep the officer on solid footing while handling daily issues and conflicts.

SERVICE ORIENTED

Being service oriented is a must for the company officer. Their field of range of responsibilities is broad, but the officer must always remember that the purpose and reason that the fire service exists is to provide service. The fire service is all about service. Providing service to your community can range from responding to fires, to handling EMS situations, to performing every type and scale of rescue operation. Skills such as high angle rescue, confined space operations, swiftwater operations, and hazardous material mitigation are critical. All of these are technical operations that require special equipment, training, and coordination. But what about all the other smaller, less urgent-sounding situations, such as the person who calls because the pole in front of his home with the power lines on it is tilting to the left? Or the man that calls to request assistance because his 15-year-old granddaughter has not come home on time? And then there's the woman who calls with the report of an odor in her building that turns out to be someone cleaning carpets across the hallway. All of these calls sound pretty unnecessary to us as

firefighters, but we must always remember that every call is a call for help. We exist to handle those calls. We may not be training for them or even looking forward to them, but the officer must always remember that we are here for "them." Handling every call, no matter how unnecessary it may appear to be upon arrival, is what we do. Not only do we need to do it, but we should always tell people to call us back again if they need our services. The fire "service!"

BEING A LEADER

Being a leader is the final skill or ability that we will review. Certainly, an entire article could be written to address leadership because it is such a broad topic. You need to know that a company officer with all of the above described skills, working in a well-staffed and trained company, will still fall far short of the mark that they need to reach if they do not possess and develop their leadership skills. The company officer's job is to guide and lead the group, their firefighters, to get a variety of jobs completed. Knowing this, it is obvious that they cannot do it alone. They need to have a professional, positive relationship with their firefighters so they can use their efforts to complete the tasks. An officer who must order or lean on their firefighters to get them to work must always be a constant presence to make sure the work continues. An officer with excellent leadership skills, on the other hand, will often simply need to let the group or company know what it is they want done and it is completed in short order. Good company officers can often be heard saying the their firefighters work *with* them rather than *for* them. This is not just a phrase, but rather a great philosophy for a good officer with excellent leadership skills. Taking care of their firefighters both in the firehouse and out on the street, along with maintaining a positive atmosphere and professional attitude, will make for an effective leader who can get the job done.

So you see, there is quite a long list of skills and abilities that are needed to become and remain an effective company officer. The next time you think about throwing your hat into the ring for that open company officer position, ask yourself, do I have what it takes?

Source: NYS Fire Chiefs Size-Up Issue 3, 2015.

**TRAINING SAVES LIVES
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FIRE TRAINING

VOLUME 20 ◆ ISSUE 5 ◆ MAY 2016

ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS

BASEMENT FIRES

Tim Klett, Lieutenant — FDNY

It is roughly 10:00 p.m. when you receive a call for smoke in a residence, but no visible fire, as stated by the homeowner. Upon arrival you order the engine operator to find a water source and to be prepared to stretch a line to the front door of the fire building. With your orders issued, you begin your rapid perimeter size up of the building. From the front there is smoke from the eaves on both the first and second floors, with smoke also seeping from around the window frames, but still no visible fire. At the front door you encounter a moderate smoke and heat condition on the first floor, and once inside you pull the first baseboard you can get to. With the baseboard pulled, you notice smoke pushing up through the floor and also smoke pushing from around the pipe recess of the baseboard heating units. Realizing these are all signs that would indicate you prob-

ably have fire in the basement, you order the line to proceed to the top of the basement stairs and prepare to advance down.

Basement fires can be one of the most challenging and dangerous situations firefighters encounter when arriving at any scene. There are a vast number of strategies and tactical considerations at the scene of basement fires, which is why they are widely considered one of our most dangerous situations. A very important factor that makes basement fires so serious is that many true basements will be unfinished. This means that from the onset of the fire, we are dealing with a building fire and not a simple room burning in the basement. Once the fire is into the structural members of the building, our window of opportunity for a quick knockdown will be greatly diminished and it also makes it

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ENGINE OPS AT BASEMENT FIRES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The integrity of the door at the top of the stairs is paramount to the operation. Unlike attached garage doorways, which should be fire rated, the door at the top of the basement stairs is normally a cheap six-panel hollow core door.

extremely dangerous for members operating on the first floor.

When dealing with basement fires, the first action the engine officer must do is to truly identify that the fire is actually in the basement. Some of the key indicators could be smoke from the eaves, window and door frames, and around the threshold, blackened basement windows, smoke from a chimney, or simply the report from the homeowner. Once the officer is sure that the fire is in the basement, he must decide the best avenue from which to attack the fire, keeping in mind the obligation of the first line is to protect the primary means of egress. A second key factor is to find the interior basement stairs. Remember, the first floor will be smoke filled, limiting your ability to quickly locate them, but there are some indicators that may help you quickly find the basement stairs. The location of the stairs to the second floor is a big one, since normally the basement staircase is located directly below them. In single story homes the basement staircase is usually located in the kitchen toward the rear of the house. This is not a hardened rule but it is a starting point. It is also important to quickly identify the presence or lack of an alternate means of entering the basement. This could be a walk-in entrance in the rear or sides of the building or possibly an exterior staircase entrance covered with hatch-type doors. In older commercial buildings there may be the presence of a sidewalk hatchway with a small stairway or even some type of conveyer system to move goods in and out.

Once all the entrances into the basement have been identified, it is time to decide which one is best suited to advance the attack line through. When making this decision we need to consider all the variables involved and also our strategic goals. Our number one priority at any incident is the protection of life, specifically civilian's lives. With that being said, our strategic goals should reflect this. If there area viable reports of people trapped and the searches are ongoing, the first line should be charged and advanced through the front door to a position

at the top of the basement stairs.

The integrity of the door at the top of the stairs is paramount to the operation. Unlike attached garage doorways, which should be fire rated, the door at the top of



the basement stairs is normally a cheap six-panel hollow core door. It is extremely important to remember that the line should be charged prior to entering the fire building and not brought to the top of the stairs dry. When preparing the line for a potential advance down the basement stairs, any excess hose should be placed in an area that will facilitate the line's push down the stairs. Also, for safety reasons, any additional hose will be positioned on the exit side of the basement stairway. Simply put, we must try to avoid flaking line past the doorway, which in the case of an emergency would lead members away from their exit while following the line.

With the line charged and positioned at the top of the stairs, it is now the responsibility of the engine officer to decide the feasibility of advancing the line down into the basement. There are a few important considerations when making this decision—the fire condition in the basement; the design, run, and construction of the stairs; the ability to get ventilation of the basement; and if there is an alternate means of entry into the basement. All of these factors will have an impact on our ability to advance down the basement stairs.

The officer must remember that the decision to advance down the stairs should not be made until the basement door is opened. When this door is opened we must allow the basement to do what it wants to do. Remember, the first ventilation point at most basement fires will be the door at the top of the stairs. Once the basement has reacted to this door being opened, the decision can be made as to whether or not an interior push down the stairs is possi-

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

ENGINE OPS AT BASEMENT FIRES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

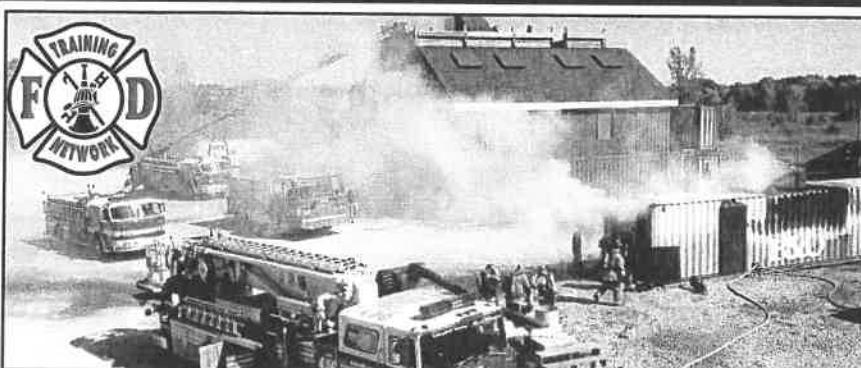
ble. If the officer decides to make the advance, the nozzle firefighter and officer should head down in unison in a semi-seated position with the nozzle firefighter in the lead. If conditions are such that the nozzle has to be operated while advancing down, and it is an enclosed stairway, it should be kept out in front and aimed at the header board above the doorway opening at the base of the stairs. If the stairway is open, then the line can be operated on either side of the stairway itself to try and gain control of the stairs for the advance down. Once the officer and the nozzle firefighter have made it to the base of the stairs and moved out of the opening, the backup firefighter should quickly move down the stairs to reunite as the second member of the nozzle team. With the nozzle now in the basement it is just a matter of finding the main body of fire to complete extinguishment. It is important to remember that basement fires are normally won or lost on the stairs; conditions will change dramatically over this 12-foot run. It is usually worse at the top of the stairs and gets a little more tolerable as you push down. Also, once in the basement it will usually get a little worse before it gets better, simply because of the water conversion into steam as it is applied to the area—usually with concrete or block walls and no ventilation.

If an advance into the basement via the interior stairs isn't possible, due to conditions and/or the fact that there is another viable entrance into the fire area, the line should be stretched to that point, charged, and advanced to extinguish the fire. If the first line is stretched to an alternate means of access into the basement, then as soon as conditions and manpower permit, a second line should be stretched into the first floor of the fire building. This line will serve as protection for the members operating and to deal with any possible extension that may occur, especially via the door at the top of the interior stairs to the basement.

Basement fires are challenging enough for even the best fire companies so remember, even with proper size up, training, and good decision making, basement fires can go bad in a hurry. Officers and firefighters should constantly update their knowledge of buildings within their response districts and pre-plan for any number of dangerous features found. Our best defense against something going wrong is to continually train and be prepared for the dangers we face each and every day, especially when dealing with basement fires.

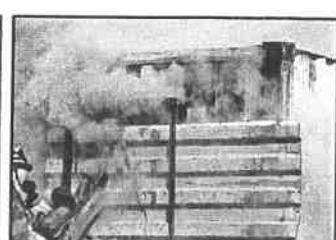
Source: NYS Fire Chiefs Size-Up, Issue 2, 2015

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COMMAND AT STRUCTURE FIRES

John Salka, Battalion Chief (retired) — FDNY



The topic of command is a broad one. Not only articles, but also entire books, have been written on the subject. Some of the elements of command are widely accepted and practiced, and some are more narrowly embraced. This article will not be a review or discussion of the classical ICS, but rather an examination and discussion of several practical and field-tested command functions and practices that work.

THE SIZE UP

Whether it is the first arriving engine company officer or the chief arriving in the battalion car, the commander must start the command function by sizing up the situation. This size up may be a 360-degree walk around when possible or it may be a series of radio transmissions to

other on scene personnel requesting information. That does not end the size up. The size up must also consider information that the commander already knows about the structure or occupancy that was collected at a fire prevention walk through or information learned during previous responses to this or similar structures. Also keep in mind that the size up can begin upon receipt of the initial alarm information. Just hearing the address or name of the location should provide the commander with lots of background information about the building, occupancy, and neighborhood.

ASSUMING COMMAND

The actual command function begins upon arrival at the building that is on fire. Some chiefs like to radio instruction to their on scene units from miles away, but this practice can be dangerous. Letting the units that are on scene know about specific structural conditions or occupancy hazards is fine, but getting into tactical instructions from a remote location is simply not a good idea. Once the commander arrives and after a rapid size up, command must be established. Again, there is no one way that is correct or best. Some chief officers arrive at a structure fire and make a radio announcement on the tactical channel that they have arrived and are in command. Others arrive and simply begin issuing orders to available units and rely on the operating personnel hearing them and realizing that they are now on scene and in command. Others select a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

COMMAND...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7



specific on scene first due unit and contact them via radio to ask what conditions they have and what actions they have taken. Whatever the manner that they use for this notification, once it is complete, all on scene firefighters and officers should know that they have arrived and are in command.

TACTICAL EVALUATION

Immediately after assuming command, employed tactics and tasks must be examined. Several units may have arrived prior to the chief, and they have hopefully initiated operations. These tactics must be looked at quickly and either adjusted, reinforced, or abandoned. If everything is moving in the right direction, the commander can continue the tactical operations that are underway. If adjustments are needed, such as a hoseline to protect an exposure, then a hoseline that has already been positioned elsewhere will have to be redeployed as required. The response and arrival time of the chief, in relation to the arrival time of the first engine or ladder company, can make this a difficult process. If the first engine and ladder company have been on scene for 2½ minutes before the chief, there is a much better chance of making successful adjustments. If the companies have been operating for 8-10 minutes, shifting gears will be a serious challenge. A tactic that may be abandoned early in an operation may rather have to be adjusted if the chief arrives much later. This is a fluid situation that must be handled with care.

CALL FOR MORE HELP

Just about every working structural fire will require more help than is dispatched on the initial alarm. This is true in almost every fire department in the country. Even

Do not be afraid to call for more help. Let me say that again. Do not be afraid to call for more help. Whether you are a large urban department or a small volunteer company, there are other units, companies, and departments available to assist you, and if you want to get the most out of your second wave of units, get them there early.

large departments like the FDNY, which may dispatch three engines, two ladders, and a battalion chief on an initial structural fire response, will add a fourth engine, a third truck, and several special units upon notification of a working fire. Do not be afraid to call for more help. Let me say that again. *Do not be afraid to call for more help.* Whether you are a large urban department or a small volunteer company, there are other units, companies, and departments available to assist you, and if you want to get the most out of your second wave of units, get them there early. Early really means that you should call them before you need them. If you wait until the fire develops to a point where it is obvious that your on scene resources are not enough to handle the situation, you may have waited too long to call for help. Mutual aid and multiple alarm units are often traveling longer distances. This means it takes them more time, and time is not on your side. I would always rather call for more units early, before their assistance was required, and have them standing by and ready to go to work, than call them later when things start to get out of hand.

STAY ON TOP OF YOUR COMPANIES

Once you give assignments to your units you must listen carefully to the radio and observe the building closely. Even companies that are making good progress inside the building may not notify you immediately, and conditions may not look like they are improving from your vantage point out front. I should mention here that I believe the commander should be *at the building*. At the building means out of the car and standing where the building, the exposures, the smoke, the operating companies, and everything else can be seen. I know some departments require the commander to sit in the vehicle, park across the street, or occupy a van or command vehicle. I hope it works for you, but I prefer to be at the event where I can see you and we can talk directly to each other. Once you assign companies or teams to interior operations, they disappear from your view. You must listen carefully to their



transmissions to you and to other units. If you have a question, ask it. If they don't answer, ask it again. Many good officers make good progress but need to be reminded to report conditions to command. Ask and you shall receive!

REMEMBER RELIEF

Hopefully, you have an air management officer or operations chief to help you, but many of us do not. If you are doing the solo command operation, remember to keep track of your companies and their air consumption. Many officers will not request relief so they and their firefighters can complete the assignment. This is a great concept, but eventually they run low on air and must exit or they begin to cheat because the smoke conditions don't look so bad. This is all nonsense! Keep track of your units' air as closely as you keep track of their progress on assignments. Don't ask officers if they need relief. Instead, inform them that their relief is on the way into the building and that they should report to you upon exiting the building. Effective and timely relief of units will also allow you to keep track of how many units you have standing by and available for assignment and if you may need to call for more assistance.

PROGRESS REPORTS

It's hard to believe that some departments do not require progress reports from commanders at structural fires. It is a good practice to provide these reports to the dispatcher for several reasons. First, it makes you aware of the time that is going by during your operation. If the

dispatcher never notifies you of the time that has elapsed at your operation, it will be hard to judge if your units are making progress. A good practice is to require the commander to provide a short and concise progress report immediately after every time-elapsed notification by the dispatcher. This also gives other units that may respond on additional alarms or mutual aid information about the conditions at the scene and what they may be faced with if they are dispatched to the location. The transmission of a progress report also requires the commander to quickly look at each element of the ongoing operation as they assemble the information that the report will contain. This can result in the commander discovering a condition that had not been noticed yet and requires them to take action. Progress reports provide for an orderly, professional, and effective fireground operation.

CONCLUSION

These major components of command will help you manage a structural fire. Obviously, larger commercial buildings may require adjustments in both tactics and methods from how private dwelling fires are handled. Differences in the size of a department, the number of companies immediately available, the number of units dispatched on an initial alarm, and the staffing are just a few of the variables that may require you to handle and implement these command elements differently. Experience and training will help you develop your command expertise and run an effective and professional fireground operation.

Source: NYS Fire Chiefs Size Up, Issue 1 2016



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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

LEADERSHIP AND THE JANITOR

James Moschgat — USAF (retired)

William "Bill" Crawford was an unimpressive figure, one you could easily overlook during a hectic day at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Mr. Crawford, as most of us referred to him back in the late 1970s, was our squadron janitor.

While we cadets busied ourselves preparing for academic exams, athletic events, Saturday morning parades, and room inspections — or never-ending leadership classes — Bill quietly moved about the squadron mopping and buffing floors, emptying trash cans, cleaning toilets, or just tidying up the mess 100 college-age kids can leave in a dormitory.

Sadly, and for many years, few of us gave him much notice, rendering little more than a passing nod or throwing a curt, "G'morning!" in his direction as we hurried off to our daily duties. Why? Perhaps it was because of the way he did his job — he always kept the squadron area spotlessly clean, even the toilets and showers gleamed. Frankly, he did his job so well, none of us had to notice or get involved. After all, cleaning toilets was his job, not ours.

Maybe it was his physical appearance that made him disappear into the background. Bill didn't move very quickly, and in fact, you could say he even shuffled a bit, as if he suffered from some sort of injury. His gray hair and wrinkled face made him appear ancient to a group of young cadets. And his crooked smile, well, it looked a little funny. Face it, Bill was an old man working in a young

person's world. What did he have to offer us on a personal level?

Maybe it was Mr. Crawford's personality that rendered him almost invisible to the young people around him. Bill was shy, almost painfully so. He seldom spoke to a cadet unless they addressed him first, and that didn't happen very often. Our janitor always buried himself in his work, moving about with stooped shoulders, a quiet gait, and an averted gaze. If he noticed the hustle and bustle of cadet life around him, it was hard to tell. For whatever reason, Bill blended into the woodwork and became just another fixture around the squadron. The Academy, one of our nation's premier leadership laboratories, kept us busy from dawn till dusk. And Mr. Crawford... well, he was just a janitor.

That changed one fall Saturday afternoon in 1976. I was reading a book about World War II and the tough Allied ground campaign in Italy, when I stumbled across an incredible story.

On September 13, 1943, a Private William Crawford from Colorado, assigned to the 36th Infantry Division, had been involved in some bloody fighting on Hill 424 near Altavilla, Italy.

The words on the page leapt out at me, "in the face of intense and overwhelming hostile fire... with no regard for personal safety... on his own initiative, Private Crawford single-handedly attacked fortified enemy positions." It continued, "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at



risk of life above and beyond the call of duty, the President of the United States..."

"Holy cow," I said to my roommate, "you're not going to believe this, but I think our janitor is a Medal of Honor recipient." We all knew Mr. Crawford was a World War II Army vet, but that didn't keep my friend from looking at me as if I was some sort of alien being. Nonetheless, we couldn't wait to ask Bill about the story.

We met Mr. Crawford bright and early Monday and showed him the page in question from the book, anticipation and doubt on our faces. He stared at it for a few silent moments and then quietly uttered something like, "Yep, that's me." Mouths agape, my roommate and I looked at one another, then at the book, and quickly back at our janitor. Almost at once, we both stuttered, "Why didn't you ever tell us about it?" He slowly replied after some thought, "That was one day in my life and it happened a long time ago." I guess we were all at a loss for words after that. We had to hurry off to class and Bill, well, he had chores to attend to.

After that brief exchange, things were never again the same around our squadron. Word spread like wildfire among the cadets that we had a hero in our midst — Mr. Crawford, our janitor, had been bestowed The Medal! Cadets who had once passed by Bill with hardly a glance, now greeted him with a smile and a respectful, "Good morning, Mr. Crawford."

Those who had before left a mess for the "janitor" to clean up, started taking it upon themselves to put things in order. Cadets routinely stopped to talk to Bill throughout the day and we even began inviting him to our formal squadron functions. He'd show up dressed in a conservative dark suit and quietly talk to those who approached him, the only sign of his heroics being a simple blue, star-spangled lapel pin. Almost overnight, Bill went from being a simple fixture in our squadron to one of our teammates.

Mr. Crawford changed too, but you had to look closely to notice the difference. After that fall day in 1976, he seemed to move with more purpose, his shoulders didn't seem to be as stooped, he met our greetings with a direct gaze and a stronger "good morning" in return, and he flashed his crooked smile more often. The squadron gleamed as always, but everyone now seemed to notice it more. Bill even got to know most of us by our first names, something that didn't happen often at the Academy. While no one ever formally acknowledged the change, I think we became Bill's cadets and his squadron.

As often happens in life, events sweep us away from those in our past. The last time I saw Bill was on graduation day in June 1977. As I walked out of the squadron for the last time, he shook my hand and simply said, "Good luck, young man." With that, I embarked on a career that has been truly lucky and blessed.

Mr. Crawford continued to work at the Academy and eventually retired in his native Colorado, one of four Medal of Honor recipients who lived in the small town of Pueblo.

A wise person once said, "*It's not life that's important, but those you meet along the way that make the difference.*" Bill was one who made a difference for me. Bill Crawford, our janitor, taught me many valuable, unforgettable leadership lessons, and I think of him often. *Here are ten I'd like to share:*

BE CAUTIOUS OF LABELS

Labels you place on people may define your relationship to them and bind their potential. Sadly, and for a long time, we labeled Bill as just a janitor, but he was so much more. Therefore, be cautious of a leader who callously says, "Hey, he's just an Airman." Likewise, don't tolerate the O-1, who says, "I can't do that, I'm just a lieutenant."

EVERYONE DESERVES RESPECT

Because we hung the "janitor" label on Mr. Crawford, we often wrongly treated him with less respect than others. He deserved much more, and not just because he had received the Medal of Honor. Bill deserved respect because he was a janitor, walked among us, and was a part of our team.

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

LEADERSHIP AND THE JANITOR...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Private William John Crawford was a scout for 3rd Platoon, Company I, 142nd Regiment, 36th Infantry Division, fighting in Italy during World War II on September 13, 1943 — just four days after the invasion of Salerno.

Crawford was a hero, lauded by peers for his actions in combat but was missing in action and presumed dead. Army Major General Terry Allen presented Crawford's Medal of Honor posthumously to his father, George, on May 11, 1944, at Camp (now Fort) Carson, near Colorado Springs, Colorado.

It was later learned that Crawford was alive and in a POW camp. He returned to the United States after 18 months in captivity. Crawford retired from the Army after 23 years and went to work as a janitor at the U.S. Air Force Academy so that he could remain close to the military. Master Sergeant William J. Crawford passed away in 2000. He is buried on the grounds of the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

COURTESY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Be courteous to all around you, regardless of rank or position. Military customs, as well as common courtesies, help bond a team. When our daily words to Mr. Crawford turned from perfunctory "hellos" to heartfelt greetings, his demeanor and personality outwardly changed. It made a difference for all of us.

TAKE TIME TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

Life in the military is hectic, but that's no excuse for not knowing the people you work for and with. For years a hero walked among us at the Academy and we never knew it. Who are the heroes that walk in your midst?

ANYONE CAN BE A HERO

Mr. Crawford certainly didn't fit anyone's standard definition of a hero. Moreover, he was just a private on the day he earned his Medal. Don't sell your people short, for any one of them may be the hero who rises to the occasion when duty calls. On the other hand, it's easy to turn to your proven performers when the chips are down, but don't ignore the rest of the team. Today's rookie could and should be tomorrow's superstar.

LEADERS SHOULD BE HUMBLE

Most modern day heroes, and some leaders, are anything but humble, especially if you calibrate your "hero

meter" on today's athletic fields. End zone celebrations and self-aggrandizement are what we've come to expect from sports greats. Not Mr. Crawford—he was too busy working to celebrate his past heroics. Leaders would be well served to do the same.

LIFE WON'T ALWAYS HAND YOU WHAT YOU THINK YOU DESERVE

We in the military work hard and, dang it, we deserve recognition, right? However, sometimes you just have to persevere, even when accolades don't come your way. Perhaps you weren't nominated for junior officer or airman of the quarter as you thought you should — don't let that stop you. Don't pursue glory; pursue excellence. Private Bill Crawford didn't pursue glory — he did his duty and then swept floors for a living.

NO JOB IS BENEATH A LEADER

If Bill Crawford, a Medal of Honor recipient, could clean latrines and smile, is there a job beneath your dignity? Think about it.

PURSUE EXCELLENCE

No matter what task life hands you, do it well. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "If life makes you a street sweeper, be the best street sweeper you can be." Mr. Crawford modeled that philosophy and helped make our dormitory area a home.

LIFE IS A LEADERSHIP LABORATORY

All too often we look to some school or class to teach us about leadership when, in fact, life is a leadership laboratory. Those you meet everyday will teach you enduring lessons if you just take time to stop, look, and listen. I spent four years at the Air Force Academy, took dozens of classes, read hundreds of books, and met thousands of great people. I gleaned leadership skills from all of them, but one of the people I remember most is Mr. Bill Crawford and the lessons he unknowingly taught. Don't miss your opportunity to learn.

Bill Crawford was a janitor. However, he was also a teacher, friend, role model, and one great American hero. *Thanks, Mr. Crawford, for some valuable leadership lessons.*

Source: <http://usoonpatrol.org>

FIRE & TRAINING



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ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS

INITIAL ATTACK STRATEGIES

Since 1872, Sacramento Fire has been an aggressive, interior firefighting department and with this philosophy comes some associated inherent risk and dangers. This philosophy has transcended generations of Sacramento Firefighters. To operate aggressively and safely, there is a basic set of rules or beliefs that have been established over time, often as a result of lessons learned.

The Engine Company rules that have been developed and embraced over time include:

Rule 1: Operating nozzles in windows should be avoided.

Rule 2: Remember to always protect the stairwells when firefighters are operating above the fire.

Rule 3: As a first-arriving engine company, put one line in service and do it well.

Rule 4: Never enter the fire area without a charged hose line.

Rule 5: Get the hose line inside to the seat of the fire.

Rule 6: Extinguish or clear all lower floors of fire prior to advancing above. DO NOT PASS FIRE.

Rule 7: Make sure hose lines are not operated in opposition to each other.

Rule 8: Avoid putting a 2½-inch line in service without first securing a water supply.

Rule 9: No more than two hose lines in a single stairwell.

INITIAL ATTACK STRATEGIES

Stretching and operating hose lines is the primary function of the engine company

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INITIAL ATTACK STRATEGIES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ny that ultimately leads to fire extinguishment. Hose lines are stretched into the building to extinguish the fire after the location of the fire has been determined. A single engine company can only effectively stretch **one hose line** (Rule 3). The need for additional hose lines will require additional engine companies.

The first and second engine companies may work together to get the first hose line into operation when the fire is above the ground floor or a 2½-inch line is the first hose line stretched. Some situations may require more engine companies to assist in stretching the first hose line. Every effort should be made to get the first hose line into operation before a second hose line is stretched.

Civilians trapped inside a structure or exposed to heat and smoke are considered the primary exposures. The first hose line should be positioned between the fire and those threatened. It is normally stretched into the building via the front door; however, it may be stretched via exterior stairs or fire escapes. Engine companies should avoid the temptation of placing a nozzle in a window when crews are operating inside or when there is a possibility of civilians still occupying the structure (Rule 1). Priority should always be given to protecting the means of egress and protecting the stairs (Rule 2). When life safety is **not** a factor, then the first hose line is placed between the fire and the most severe exposure. A hose line placed to cover an exterior exposure should be positioned so that it can be used on the fire building with the possibility of moving it inside.

Knowledge of the floor layout is a very valuable asset to an engine company advancing under fire and/or smoke conditions. If the smoke is not banked down to the floor, a quick glance at floor level before opening the nozzle can give the nozzle firefighter and officer an indication of the floor layout. From this position, furniture, debris, or other obstacles, as well as possible victims, may be visible. The glow of the fire may indicate the direction and distance the hose line has to advance. Once the line is open, any visibility will be lost until adequate ventilation is accomplished.

The nozzle must be bled and the pattern set to a straight stream (on combination nozzles) before the engine company enters the fire area. **Never enter the fire area with an uncharged hose line** (Rule 4). However, the hose line should be stretched as close to the fire area as possible before being charged. An example would be when stretching to upper floors on multifamily dwellings. An uncharged hose line is stretched more rapidly and is less



fatiguing than attempting to move a charged hose line into position. As a general rule, if you are masking up, you should be calling for water.

All firefighters should operate on the same side of the hose line. When the door to the fire area is opened, the crew should be low and to one side of the opening to let the heat and gases vent prior to advancing—“stay low and let it blow.” When possible, the line should be flaked so that the nozzle and lead length are on the hinge side of the doorway for inward-swinging (residential) doors and the knob side for outward-swinging (commercial) doors. This initially gives the nozzle team better coverage of the room as the door is less of an obstruction. Do not crowd the nozzle firefighter, especially on a 1¾-inch hose line. Pin the line to the floor to absorb the nozzle reaction, and then be prepared to advance forward when needed. Once the hose line is advancing, keep it moving toward the seat of the fire. To reduce the chance of burns and guarantee rapid knockdown, the nozzle should be moved aggressively and deliberately. Let the reach and penetrating ability of the stream do the work, especially in large area buildings or when several rooms are involved in fire.

The stream should be operated out front and overhead. The water should be deflected off the ceiling and upper walls. The nozzle firefighter should hold the nozzle at arms length to allow for maneuverability and change of nozzle direction. As the fire darkens down, the angle of the stream may be lowered to directly cool burning material. Try to get as close to the fire as safely practical without risking burn injury.

“Penciling” is NOT an appropriate technique for the application of water, and its use is discouraged. Penciling works well in a “flashover trailer” during a training/controlled session to demonstrate how water application

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

INITIAL ATTACK STRATEGIES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

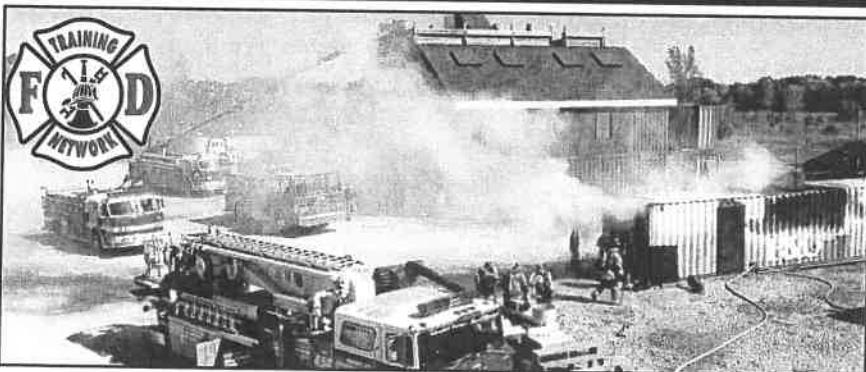
affects fire behavior but can be a fatal mistake when applied to pre-flashover conditions during actual fires. Potential flashover conditions should be eliminated, not delayed. In high heat conditions, with no visible fire (black fire), that drive the engine company to the floor, the nozzle should be flowed overhead ahead of the advance to cool the smoke and ceiling temperatures and prevent a flashover or rollover. If this action does not quickly improve the conditions then consideration should be given to backing out the hose line until additional ventilation is completed.

The officer must stay alert to the intentions of the nozzle firefighter and be able to quickly support that firefighter. When the nozzle firefighter wants to change the direction or elevation of the stream, the backup firefighter must maneuver the section of hose behind the nozzle firefighter in the opposite direction. As the advance is made, listen for the crackling of fire, look for a glow in the smoke and feel for increasing heat. Listen to the sound of the stream as you sweep the nozzle across the room or area. The sound of water striking a wall will change if an opening such as a door or window is encountered. This opening may lead to another room or hallway where fire is still burning.

A fundamental rule of an engine company is "*do not pass fire*" (Rule 6). When advancing a hose line through a fire area consisting of several fire rooms, it is usually necessary to operate the stream from the doorway of each room. By utilizing the reach of the stream, the fire can be knocked down in these rooms and the hose line can be advanced rapidly to extinguish the remaining areas. This tactic may leave smoldering debris, but there should be no visible flame in the areas passed. (The term "*knockdown*" means to have control of the fire area without complete extinguishment.) As the attack hose line is advanced through the fire area, *all* doors must be opened to ensure that the nozzle does not accidentally pass an area involved in fire.

Prior to advancing the hose line to upper floors, it is always a good practice to check the lower floors for fire before proceeding to an upper floor position (Rule 6). If during the search of the first floor fire is encountered, then the first hose line should hold position on the lower floor so that the stairwell can be protected (Rule 2). If the first floor checks clear, then the first hose line can be advanced to the upper floor, and a second line is stretched to the first floor to protect egress for the crews operating above them.

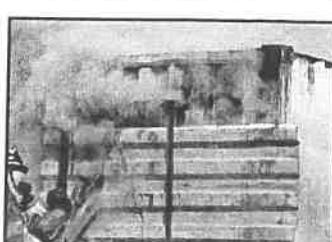
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Once the fire appears to be knocked down, consider shutting down the nozzle to let the smoke and steam lift. Be prepared to reopen the nozzle at any moment. The floor should be swept with the stream as you advance to cool any burning material and prevent knee and leg burns. This action will also sweep debris from the path of the advancing engine company crew.

SUPPRESSION DIFFICULTIES

There are a couple of common situations that many times result in the advance of the nozzle team being stopped or slowed:

Situation 1 — Fire will not darken down or cool down.
An engine company is making good progress advancing through a fire area and is suddenly stopped or slowed by fire that will not cool or darken down.

Possible causes:

- The stream is not adequately penetrating into the fire area or the flow may be inadequate for the size/intensity of the fire.
- A heavy body of fire may exist in another area that the stream is not reaching or penetrating.

Possible solutions:

- The stream direction may need to be adjusted to enter the room more completely or an advance of a few more feet may be necessary to reach the seat of the fire.
- The gallons per minute flow may be insufficient from kinks in the line or low pump pressure. Removing the kinks or increasing the pressure should result in an increased flow and faster knockdown of the fire. A 2½-inch hose line may need to replace the initial 1¾-inch hose line because of more fire than originally estimated.
- If fire exists in an area unreachable by the hose line being used, such as the floor below or an adjoining area, the engine company must make a stand at this point and hold the fire until a second, longer hose line can be stretched.

Situation 2—Fire has darkened down but will not cool down

Possible causes:

- The material and furnishings in the fire area have not been completely extinguished.

- Fire has extended into the walls and/or ceiling spaces and continues to burn in those spaces.
- There is fire uncontrolled below this area.
- Inadequate ventilation of the fire area.

Possible solution:

- The areas where the fire was knocked down may need additional water application to completely extinguish all material, furnishings, and structural components.
- Walls, floors, and ceilings must be opened up to expose and extinguish any hidden fire.
- Additional hose lines may be stretched to the floor or area below to check for and extinguish fire.
- Initial or additional ventilation must be performed including the use of hydraulic ventilation by the engine company.

If it becomes necessary to withdraw an attack hose line from a position because of fire intensity, the stream must be kept in operation and the hose line should be backed out. Firefighters withdrawing a hose line from an interior position in the fire area should never turn their backs on the fire. The hose line with the nozzle flowing is the exiting engine company's lifeline. Should the firefighters lose or drop it, they could get lost in the building or not be able to control the flashover/rollover that is taking place at the ceiling. Both the nozzle firefighter and the officer should exit the fire area in a low crouch position, trying not to crawl. Crawling may be too slow. The stream should be directed at a 45-degree angle so that water will not fall on the crew.

This article is an excerpt of Sacramento Fire Department Engine Company Handbook, 2012 Edition. While developed and printed by the Sacramento Fire Department the information is applicable to all departments.

**TRAINING SAVES LIVES
FIREFIGHTERS**



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

LEADERSHIP IN THE REAL WORLD

Bob Burns, Battalion Chief (retired) — FDNY

Before we can talk about developing and practicing effective leadership skills, we have to ensure that we are building these skills on a solid footing. This footing is called the *Foundation of Leadership*. The Foundation of Leadership contains four cornerstones that serve as the building blocks of leadership development. They are: character, competence, credibility and consistency.

CHARACTER

Followers want leaders with character and integrity. They want to know that their leaders will do “the right thing” and not sell them out for personal gain or when the going gets tough. People want to know how much you care, before they care how much you know. Without character, there is no foundation for trust. If people don’t trust you, they won’t follow you. If no one is following, you’re not leading!

COMPETENCE

You might be a person of good character, but if you don’t have a high level of technical competence as it relates to firefighting and emergency operations, people will not be willing to put their welfare in your hands. Nobody will follow an incompetent leader, especially when lives are at risk! To be influential in the fire service you need to be a competent and confident leader. You cannot have true confidence without being technically competent. You must know your job – there is just no faking it!

So does this mean that leaders need to be perfect and have all of the answers? Of course not. We are all human beings and have our imperfections. However, effective leaders compensate for their “humanity” with self-awareness and humility. Once we are aware and humble enough to recognize and admit our shortcomings, we can engage in deliberate practice, team building, and network development to increase our competence.

CREDIBILITY

Credibility is the product of honesty and integrity. It is earned by “walking the talk” – every day. When you build your credibility, you increase your *reputation capital*, and reputation capital is the currency of leadership. If you want to be trusted and have people willingly follow you – be trustworthy.

CONSISTENCY

Consistency is the final cornerstone of the foundation of leadership. But I am not just talking about consistency in your personal behavior. I am also talking about organizational consistency or unit consistency (leadership alignment).

As leaders, we need to ensure that there is consistency between our stated values/goals and the structural elements that we put in place to encourage these values and goals.

Leaders must align systems and structures to reinforce the core values and highest priorities of their organization.



If the structure (rules, customs, culture) don't match your rhetoric, the structure will always win out at the end of the day. Talk is cheap. The only form of communication that can really be believed is behavior!

The four cornerstones of the foundation of leadership create an atmosphere of trust and an environment of safety for both leaders and followers. This positive organizational environment will have a major impact on the daily operations within your department.

If you have not established a personal foundation made up of the four cornerstones of leadership, or are not willing to put the effort into growing in these areas, I don't believe that there is any amount of leadership training or set of superficial skills that will make you an effective leader. *A shaky foundation results in an unstable structure.*

PROMOTE YOURSELF

In the *leadership model* choosing to promote yourself and accept the responsibility of your rank/position is the event that starts you down the road to becoming an effective leader. Promoting yourself has nothing to do with "self promotion." Bragging about how smart you are or what rank you have attained will not help you to lead a crew or an organization.

Promoting yourself means making the mental and emotional break from your previous job and preparing yourself to fulfill the challenges of your new one. It means accepting the responsibilities of your position and **being willing to act** in ways that fulfill those responsibilities. And promoting yourself is not limited to the specific time of your formal promotion.

I would hope that as you gain experience and mature as a leader, that you would promote yourself into some of the "unofficial" roles of leadership that so desperately need to be filled in today's fire service – like coach, mentor, and role model.

Leadership is a choice. We are who we choose to be. But the sophisticated leader (what we are all striving to become) understands that real leadership is a little more complicated than just self awareness and the "power of individual choice". Whether you like it or not, no leadership decision is made in a vacuum. It is bigger than just you! Fire officers must consider "leadership solidarity" (leaders supporting each other and working together) when making individual decisions. Our willingness to work together will impact on our ability to exercise effective *individual leadership*.

The lone warrior myth of leadership is just that – a myth. In reality, we are a "team of teams" and need to coordinate our efforts to be most effective.

Great teams and great organizations all practice solidarity by cultivating a common vision, focusing on shared values, and fostering a deep buy-in to them.

Engaging in leadership solidarity will help us overcome our individual differences that might otherwise lead to unhealthy competition, freelancing and dysfunction.

To help you promote yourself consider the following:

- All leadership begins with self leadership. Work on yourself first.
- The events of our lives may influence us but the choices that we make define us.
- If the structure of your organization does not support your rhetoric, the structure will always win out at the end of the day.
- Never forget where you came from, but always remember that you are not there anymore.
- Change your mindset - get out of the habitual "cage."
- In non-emergency situations, slow yourself down. Grow the space between stimulus and response, process additional "size-up", and make better decisions.
- Outsmart your biology, practice PTA (Pause, Think, and Ask legitimate questions).
- Rework your network. The type of advice and support that you need has changed.
- Engage in "Leadership Solidarity" because it's bigger than just you!

FIND YOUR VOICE – SHARE YOUR VOICE

Who you are, what your values are, what you stand for ... they are your anchor, your north star. You won't find them in a book (or in a PP presentation). You will find them in your soul - Ann Mulchay former CEO Xerox.

Ideally, we should make decisions that reflect our character, values and moral codes. But in reality, most of us go through life without associating what we are doing with a sense of purpose and a process of reflection. We simply respond on auto pilot or give in to social pressures and customs.

When difficult choices come up in our careers as officers, we may not have done the introspective work that serves as the source of inner strength for these difficult

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LEADERSHIP...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

decisions. This introspective process is called “Finding Your Voice.”

Finding Your Voice is one of the most important leadership development activities that we engage in. Why? Because every other decision that we make (large and small) will be influenced by our *voice*; our values.

Leadership behaviors develop naturally once our internal foundation is in place. If you don’t develop this internal foundation, mere techniques and skills can never compensate.

Although finding your voice is a personal and on-going process, there are several exercises that we can all use to get us started on the right path.

Exercise #1: Carve out your commandments – your “non-negotiables.”

Exercise #2: Square yourself away on the “hot button” issues in your organization.

Exercise #3: Consider and preplan your “critical predictable.”

Exercise #4: Develop and consult your “action” mission statement.

To help you find and share your voice, consider the following:

- We only grow by taking risks. The greatest risk is being honest with ourselves.
- Tell me what you want...what you really, really want.
- Answer the follow-up question. What are you going to do to get what you really, really want?
- Train your people – competence increases safety.
- Have the courage to speak up, that’s your job!
- Never grow a wishbone where your backbone should be.
- Never walk past a mistake – make on the spot corrections without interfering with the chain of command when possible.
- Corrections done in a firm and fair manner *with an explanation* are generally appreciated, not resented.
- The truth won’t set you free until you develop the skills and muster the moral courage to deal with it.
- A positive “No” requires a greater “Yes” (the positive reasons for your “no”).
- Finish the Story, or someone else will. **SHARE YOUR VOICE!**

KNOW THE TOOLS OF YOUR TRADE

At this point in our personal leadership development process we have established ourselves as legitimate leaders by having our *foundation of leadership* firmly in place. We have promoted ourselves and accepted the responsibilities of our rank/position. We have found our voice and connected with our values – we know where we want to go. Our challenge now is to influence those around us to join us on our journey.

If we are going to be leading people, we should have a basic knowledge of human nature and the dynamics that influence human behavior. We know that “everyone is different” and that there are many unique personality types. However, there are several powerful influence factors that are always in play and are common to all human beings. I like to call these influencers *The Big 3*.

These 3 foundational influence factors are our *paradigms*, our *consciousness level*, and our *view of the potential consequences of our actions*.

A paradigm is an assumption, a theory, or a frame of reference that we use to “see” and process the things around us. Our paradigms are the glasses through which we see the world. Paradigms shape how we define ourselves, and how we define ourselves impacts on everything we do. If I “see” my job as a noble calling and an opportunity to help others, my behaviors will be guided by that paradigm. On the other hand, if I “see” my job only as a means to a paycheck, I will probably behave quite differently. **Paradigms influence behavior!**

Consciousness level is just a fancy term for how much we know and understand the information that we have – aka “our cognitive sophistication.”

Humans make decisions and engage in behaviors based on what they think they know. For example (finish the sentence): “If I only knew then what I know now, I would have ... behaved differently.” **Consciousness level influences behavior!**

However, it doesn’t matter how accurate our paradigms are or how high our consciousness level is, because we are human beings, sometimes we forget who we really are and what is really important. Those are the times when we need to be reminded that there are consequences to our actions. People choose their behaviors in part, based on what they think will happen to them as a result (a mini map of cause and effect) – aka a *consequence bundle*. If I know that a cop is hiding behind the trees with his radar gun, I tend to drive within the speed limit. **Consequences influence behavior!**

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When it comes to leadership and influence, paradigms, consciousness level, and consequences are the tools of the leadership trade. All leaders should be actively engaged in these 3 influencers. They are simply too powerful to ignore!

In your role as a leader and influencer consider the following:

- Be aware of the power of the paradigm.
- Our paradigms affect our perceptions (how we see things), which affect our emotions (how we feel about what we “see”), which ultimately affect our behaviors (what we do).
- Carefully evaluate your paradigms – stop blowing up lighthouses!
- Engage in the “shaping of paradigms” in your units and commands.
- Effective leaders shape paradigms by setting standards, modeling behavior, and telling the stories of their organization.
- Raise the consciousness level of the members of your team.
- Communicate the “leader’s intent” – the “why” behind the tactic or task.
- Policies, systems, and programs (any method for encouraging behavior) will never function fully until leaders are willing to address deviations and violations.
- What often differentiates the worst, the good, and the best organizations is how they handle consequences and accountability.
- It is easier to keep them out of trouble than get them out of trouble.
- A lie unchallenged becomes the truth.
- Tolerated behavior becomes the “standard.”

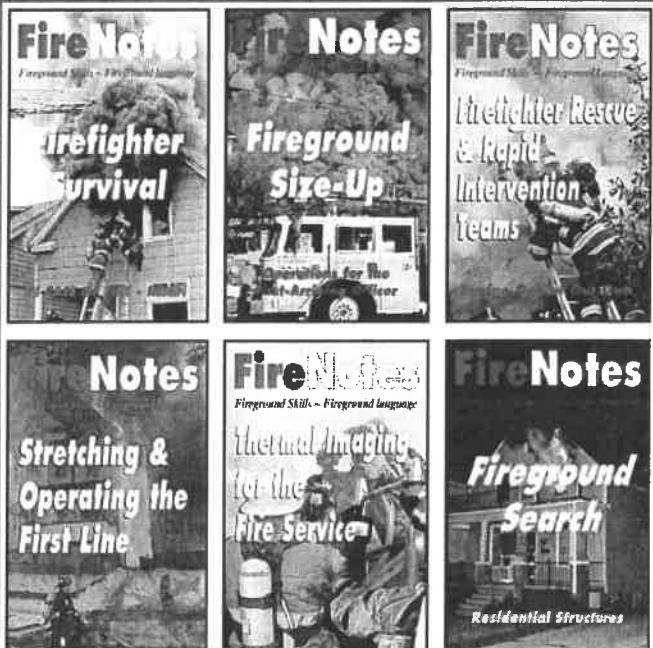
Suggested Reading List

- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey
- *From Buddy to Boss*, Chase Sargent (Virginia Beach FD Ret.)
- *Crucial Accountability*, Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler
- *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg
- *It Worked For Me In Life and Leadership*, Colin Powell

I am always available to answer questions or discuss leadership issues via e-mail. You can reach me at BCBBFLSTP@aim.com If you put COBC 2016 on the subject line, I will make sure that I open it promptly and respond as soon as possible.

Chief Burns gave this presentation at the 2016 Command Officer Bootcamp. For more information about next year's bootcamp visit: <https://countyfiretactics.com>.

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VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 7 • JULY 2016

ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS

ATTIC FIRES

Tim Klett, Lieutenant – FDNY

Attic fires, whether in a small single-family home or a large multiple dwelling, can pose significant challenges and prove taxing for most fire departments.

Determining the location and extent of the fire is critical for the first arriving companies to select the appropriate strategy and tactics. Upon confirmation of a fire in the attic space, crews should then identify the most effective and efficient means of accessing and applying water to the area of involvement. Consideration also must be given to the construction and contents of the attic. Assessing its configuration and usage of the space is of great importance. Safety at these fires is also a major concern as fires in these small, confined areas have the propensity to escalate dramatically, often with little time for firefighters to react.

When arriving on the scene of a reported attic fire, it is important to note that the appearance can vary greatly, ranging from a dramatic display of smoke and fire to nothing at all. However, do not be misled. Attic fires are extremely volatile and conditions can change rapidly, so never underestimate the initial size-up. Even if you arrive to find heavy smoke showing from the eaves, attic windows, ridge vents or pushing through roof shingles, it is imperative that you first perform a search of the lower floors (especially the basement) to be sure the fire has not simply extended to the attic from below. Focusing solely on the smoke condition and initiating tactics for attic fires prior to verifying the fire's true location can have severe consequences.

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ATTIC FIRES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Understanding and recognizing the style and construction of the roof is a vital piece of information as well. Gambrel, gabled, hip, and mansard are just a few of the more common types of roof construction you will encounter, each with their own unique set of hazards. Another important part of the initial size up is evaluating the pitch of the roof assembly. Simply put, the angle or roof pitch is "the number of inches the roof rises vertically for every 12 inches it extends horizontally." A low pitched roof, of a six or less, is a good indicator of an unfinished attic space, whereas a pitch of an eight or more could facilitate a (legitimate) occupied space and should be treated as such.

The attic space will normally have one of three potential variations of finishes: unfinished, partially renovated, or finished – creating an additional livable floor. With partially finished attics, you may find one room at the top of the stairs and the rest open for storage. Regardless of which variation is present, most attic spaces contain knee walls that will be either open or covered with lath and plaster, sheetrock, or even plywood. A knee wall is a short wall, typically three feet in height or less, constructed to add additional support to the rafters in wood roof construction. These walls are also used for compartmentalizing the attic to create useable space for additional living and/or storage. Knee walls, when covered, create large void spaces throughout the attic space (commonly utilized by homeowners for storage purposes). When involved in fire, access, ventilation, and water application to these areas is often limited, resulting in punishing and unstable conditions for both the engine and ladder companies.

Once it has been verified that it is actually an attic fire, the existing access points leading to that space must be located. These means of ingress may be in the form of a finished staircase, pull-down stairway, or even a scuttle opening. Utilizing these features will allow for rapid application of water into the burning attic space. In the case of a finished staircase, the fire can easily be reached and is essentially handled like any other top floor fire. With this construction feature, you will typically find one or more defined rooms. These fully furnished rooms, cou-



pled with a normally lower ceiling and limited natural ventilation openings, can produce exceptionally hot and grueling fires.

When faced with the aforementioned scenario, it is advisable to open the nozzle prior to reaching the actual floor level, allowing the nozzle team to gain control of the stairway and the immediate landing area. Once the nozzle team has control of and has advanced to the landing, they may encounter knee walls on multiple sides. A good practice is to make inspection holes in these walls to determine the existence of fire within these void spaces. If the knee walls are not inspected prior to advancing into the attic and the voids are filled with fire, conditions in the attic can rapidly deteriorate with little warning, potentially cutting off the path of escape. Additionally, these holes can be used to quickly apply water into the void space, resulting in limited control of the fire and slowing further extension until the space can be properly overhauled. Timely ventilation is also a must in this particular instance, providing the *temporary "lift"* of the superheated gases allowing the engine to rapidly control the fire in the furnished areas and allowing the ladder companies to search those rooms and begin opening up the remaining void spaces.

In the case of a pull-down stairway or scuttle opening, we are certainly dealing with a true (unfinished) attic space. Pull-down stairs are normally located in the main hallway and in line with the main gable of the roof,

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

ATTIC FIRES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

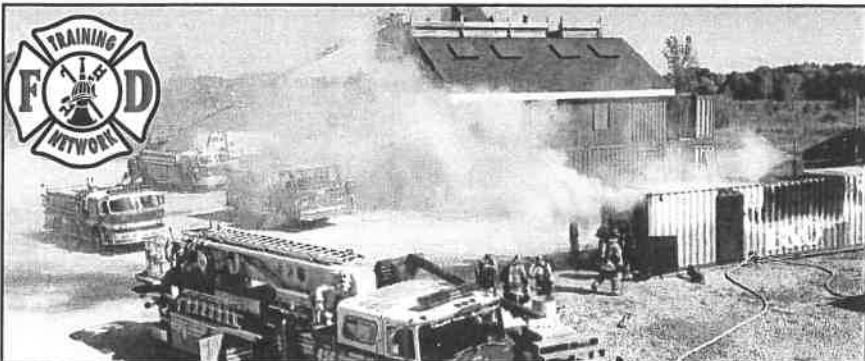


whereas the scuttle is most often found within a closet. If companies are using either of these access points to attack the fire, it is imperative to flow water up through the opening from the floor below before attempting to advance up. Gaining control of the immediate area at the top of the stairs or scuttle prior to committing is essential for the nozzle team to advance into the attic. By simply getting the nozzle successfully through that opening, it allows the engine to apply water to a large portion of the attic space.

These limited access attic spaces are potentially being used for storage and may contain large quantities of junk and other household items, essentially creating "Collyer's Mansion" (hoarding) conditions above your head. If these conditions exist, the incident commander should be immediately notified as to make everyone aware of the possible collapse potential of the attic into the floor below. When flowing water into the attic space under low visibility conditions, you should be able to detect the water runoff as it accumulates and begins to penetrate the ceiling and leach through to the floor below. An absence of this runoff can be an indication that a considerable amount of absorbent material is present within the attic space, placing a tremendous dead load and posing a significant collapse hazard. An attic fire ceiling collapse can be as minor as one room partially falling or a total collapse of the entire ceiling into the floor below. Crews operating below should be relocated until the structural integrity of the ceiling structure can be verified. If any doubt exists and fire conditions are unchecked or doubtful, a defensive posture must be considered and companies removed from the fire building.

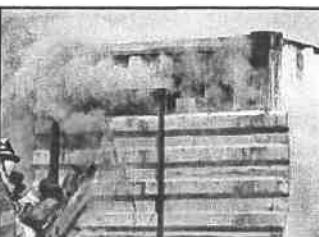
Our initial size up of the roof's pitch and 360-degree inspection of the fire building will provide certain clues as

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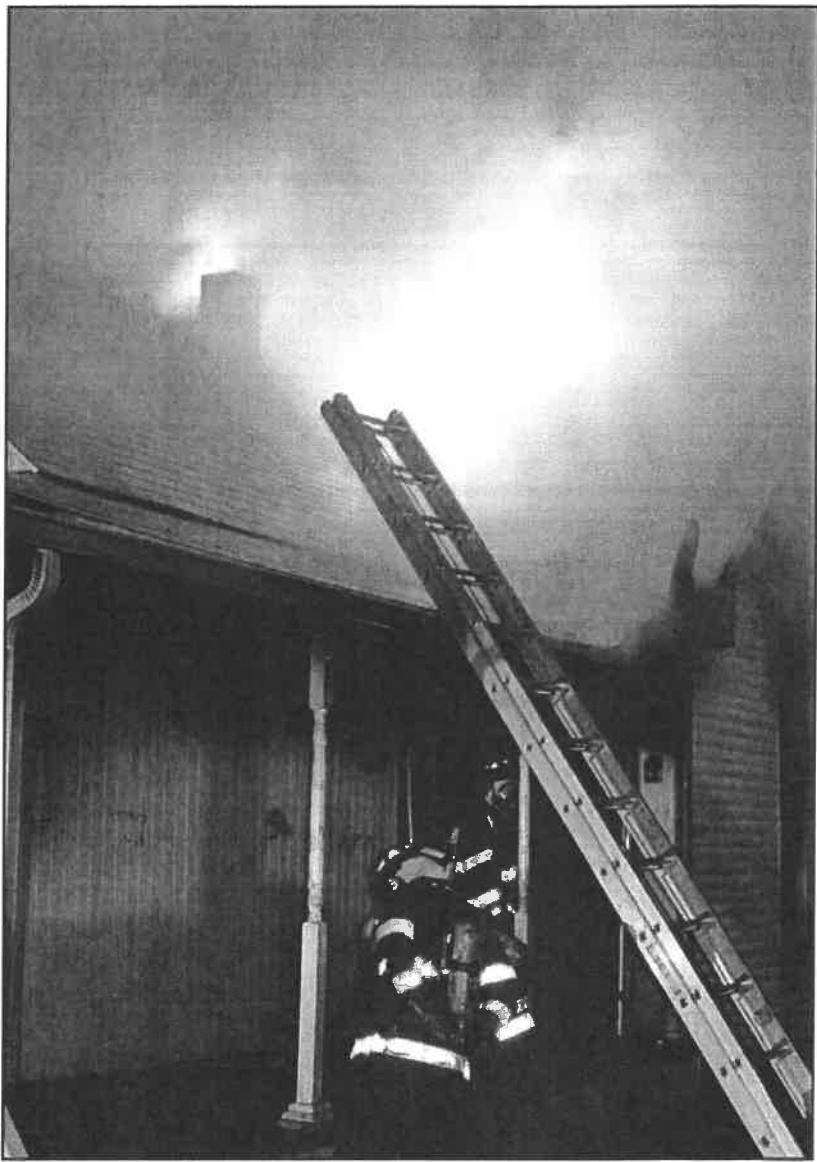
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to the accessibility of the attic space. Typically, a true low pitch roof, a three pitch or less, will possess limited or no access at all. In this situation, an alternate means of water application will be required for extinguishment, predominantly via openings made in the ceiling from the floor below. Haphazard opening of the ceilings is dangerous and should never be allowed; it could potentially cause rapid fire growth and even drop down extension. However, the process should begin by making inspection holes, preferably inside the front door or foyer area, to determine the extent of the fire and also the presence of a finished floor. If a finished floor is discovered, simply move three to four feet to either side of the original inspection hole and make another opening; keep doing this until the point where a visual inspection of the attic space can be made.

At all times, when the ceilings are being opened an attempt to locate the fire, a charged hoseline must be in position and at the ready. After determining the area of the attic where the fire is, all other overhaul activities remote from the main fire area should be stopped.

Overhauling should then continue outward from the area where the fire was first discovered, with a hose team extinguishing the fire until no more visible fire can be seen. In the event of a well-advanced fire in a no-access attic, quick application of water can be accomplished by pulling the outside soffits and flowing into the attic from there. The hoseline can be swept down the line of the soffit, most times knocking newer, flimsy, soffit material away, ultimately getting water into numerous rafter bays quickly.

Regardless of the style of home, pitch of the roof assembly, stairway construction, or type of access into the attic, success at any attic fire is essentially tied to the engine's ability to get quick water to the seat of the fire safely and efficiently. A well-trained and motivated engine company should stretch their hoseline to the front door of the fire building, charge it, bleed it, and aggressively put that line into effective operation. Attic fires are inherently problematic, as they are normally structural in nature and not just room and contents fires (even before the arrival of the initial fire companies). A fire that is already involving the



At all times, when the ceilings are being opened in attempt to locate the fire, a charged hoseline must be in position and at the ready.

structural components of the attic will greatly diminish the opportunity to control the situation quickly. Only through sheer determination and the proficient coordination of all crews operating on scene are attic fires safely brought under control, thereby limiting both injuries and property damage.

Source: www.nysfirechiefs.com, SizeUp Issue 2 • 2016



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

COMPANY OFFICER TOOLBOX

SUPERVISORS & SUBORDINATES

John Salka, Battalion Chief (retired) – FDNY

Contrary to what you might think of the article title, this article isn't about supervisors and subordinates. It's about company officers and, specifically, three levels of personnel: the company officer, their superiors and their subordinates. The company officer is the only person in the fire service who is in this unique position. They are in that place between the working firefighter and the first-level chief officer. This special level in the chain of command is responsible both up and down the chain.

THE SUPERVISOR ROLE

In a unique way, a company officer is a platoon or shift supervisor. They are responsible for the firefighters who are assigned to work with them in the same company, on the same shift. These company officers are charged with maintaining discipline, supervising firehouse duties, commanding emergency operations, keeping their crew safe, training their people and much more. Each of these responsibilities usually positions the officer in a superviso-

ry role above the firefighters, and they have been granted the authority to issue the appropriate orders to get the work done.

How the officer handles these responsibilities will have a tremendous impact on the relationship that exists between the officer and the firefighters as well as the overall effectiveness of the company. Company officers that practice effective leadership skills will develop a loyal, disciplined and effective crew. This crew will not only be well trained but they will also begin to develop increased levels of self-discipline and responsibility. These behaviors will in turn result in the company officers granting greater flexibility and self-determination to the members of their crew—and the spiral upward continues.

Company officers who insist on making every decision without consulting any member of their crew, who demand every tactic and operation be conducted as prescribed by them only and who work unilaterally rather than in cooperation with their crew will eventually discover that their crew will not demonstrate initiative but

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instead sit on their hands until they are given an order. The number of ideas, options and methods will be reduced in most cases to one. This is certainly not the most productive or effective model for a fire company.

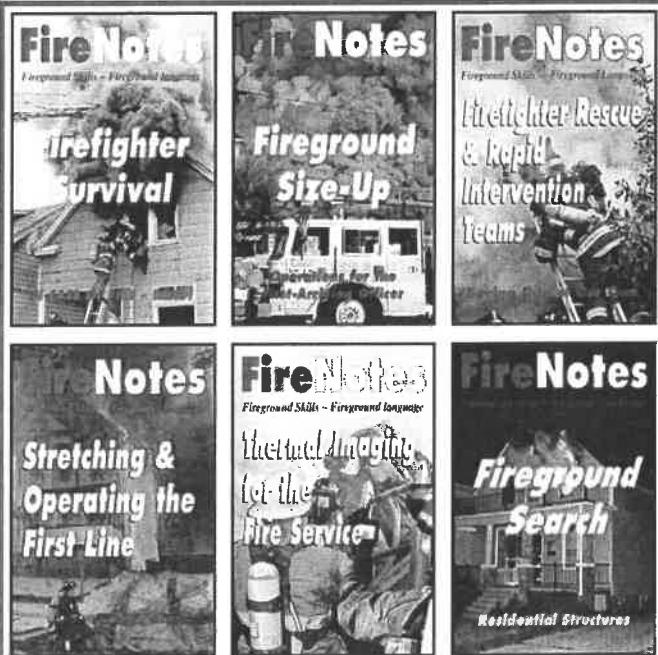
THE SUBORDINATE ROLE

When we take a look at the relationship between company officers and their supervisors, there is a different atmosphere. When a battalion or district chief is overseeing the activities and operations of a company officer, they are supervising a supervisor. They are not dealing with working firefighters whose primary responsibilities are task-oriented. They are supervising junior officers who have both tactical and strategic responsibilities in their role of supervising their subordinates. The chief is also responsible for the discipline and supervision of the firefighters, but they often delegate that work to their company officers. This issue is handled differently in many fire departments, but one of the most effective methods is for the chief officer to not only allow but also encourage their company officers to handle company-level discipline. This means that personnel conflicts, tardiness, participation in firehouse duties and other company-level transgressions should be handled by the company officer. There is no need for company officers to refer or report these low-level situations to the next level of command in order for them to be handled. Rather, they should be handled at the company level and documented for future reference.

Another issue that chief officers should consider is that some of their company officers may have different methods of handling firehouse situations. Yes, the chief has

more seniority and experience in handling problems, and they may even have an excellent reputation as a problem-solver, but they should avoid dictating to their company officers how to handle these situations. Many chiefs will confer or discuss with their company officers about how they have successfully handled similar situations in the past, but they should still leave the decision to the company officer. Obviously, more senior company officers can be granted more latitude in this endeavor, but even junior officers should be encouraged to work through these issues at the company level.

Source: www.firehouse.com



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ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS

STRETCHING SHORT

Previously we reviewed common problems that occur on the fireground to the Engine Company and provided some guides on how to overcome them. One of those issues is not deploying enough hose or stretching short of the fire. When we stretch short, we cannot effectively put water on the fire area and confine and extinguish the fire successfully. Unfortunately, when this occurs it often leads to a series of other potential problems including increased fire intensity and growth; flashover; smoke and fire travel to other areas where it may not have been an issue (such as in a multistory building); and more difficult searches and burns to firefighters trying to fix the problem in a hostile environment.

The root of this problem is a poor hose estimate. This core problem can be attributed to total reliance on pre-connected fire lines, no long hose stretch system or plan, poor to no training, or lack of pre-planning of running areas. Simply put, having options, knowing your running area, and being proficient in more than just stretching the same pre-connected fire line at each fire will go a long way toward avoiding this issue on the fireground.

POOR HOSE ESTIMATES

When assessing a hose stretch, you need to consider the distances from the apparatus to the building, from the entrance of

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**STRETCHING SHORT...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

the building to the fire area, and enough hose to cover the fire area. A simple method of estimating hose is found in the *FireNotes* "Stretching & Operating the First Line." In the book author Lieutenant Tim Klett lays out a system called D.O.S.E., standing for Distance, Obstacles, Stairs, Elevation.

Distance: From the apparatus to building entrance.

Obstacles: Any obstacles encountered between apparatus and entrance that must be overcome, such as cars, other apparatus, shrubbery, exterior elevation grades or changes, fences, or garbage.

Stairs: Amount of hose that must be stretched to overcome the stairs in the building. A return type stair may require almost one section of hose per floor, while a wrap-around type stair or other stair configuration may necessitate the need for more than one section per floor.

Conversely, a stair with a well-hole will only require one section of hose to stretch up to five floors vertically.

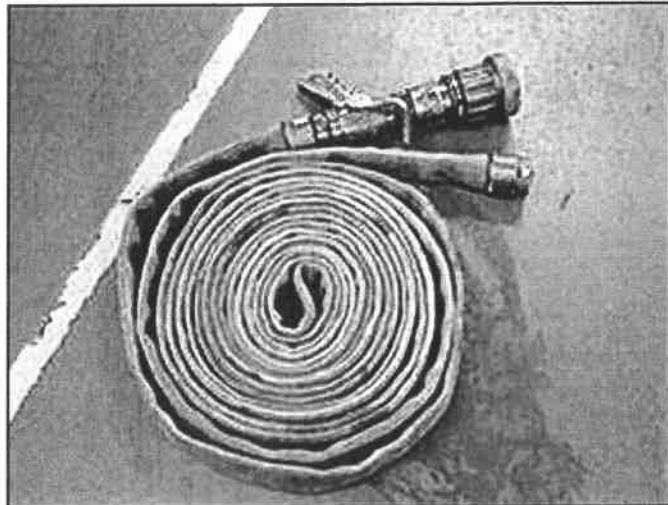
Elevation: Elevation again refers to vertical distances that need to be covered. This could be from an exterior hoisted stretch, fire escape, ladder or whatever means. You have to consider the vertical distance and have enough hose to cover that distance.

The best way to perfect hose estimations is to practice deploying hose in various situations and occupancies by performing training that allows you to think on your feet; make decisions; execute a stretch; and, if you come up short, fix it and learn for the real fire.

REALIZING YOU'RE SHORT BEFORE THE LINE IS CHARGED

When you realize you are short on your stretch before you are going to reach the fire area, you are able to fix it more easily than when you put water in the hose. Just as with all issues on the fireground, effective communication is important. Communication between the driver/operator and the engine officer will allow for the operator to start getting hose toward the entrance to save time. It also lets other responders and the incident commander know we may have a delay in water on the fire, help the second-due company know if they need to focus on helping the first line, and ensure they stretch a longer fire line for backup or additional fire control.

We aren't fans of adding hose to the end near the apparatus or outside if you are deeper into a building (such as an upper floor of a three, four, or five story multiple dwelling). When you add hose at the end nearest the appa-



ratus, you have to redeploy that hose all over again. Instead, add hose to the working end of the fire line. You have several options in this situation, including the following:

- Get more hose from the apparatus on another line and bring it to the fire area. This option will take time to go back to the apparatus, remove needed hose, and disconnect from other hose it's connected to. If you are doing this by yourself, you can easily drop the hose you've taken while disconnecting it and create a mess.
- Restretch another line that is a static bed or longer. This isn't a quick option and is often times the worst option. It might be best to communicate via the fire-ground radio that the second line be stretched off a long bed.
- Have a hose bundle or pack with spare 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch and nozzle to add to a short stretch (this could be part of a modular system you use for a long stretch with 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch and a gated wye). If you have a system that enables you to use this type of set-up it's usually easily carried and deployed. Some departments use these packs for standpipe operations as well if they use 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch. Others such as our department use these for modular systems in long hose stretches with a gated wye or for extending fire lines.
- Use donut rolls of fire hose stored on your apparatus so when deployed you have both ends of the hose for rapid attachment without having to run around. If you are in a protected stairwell of a multiple dwelling you can simply let it roll down the steps; it will flake out and you can connect at the landing. We carry our front

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



STRETCHING SHORT...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

bumper trash lines in a donut roll with nozzle. This is rapidly disconnected and deployed to extend a line. We also have a spare 1 3/4-inch donut roll if more than 50 additional feet is needed. Ensure the donut roll stays together or it will make this option harder to deploy effectively.

COMING UP SHORT AFTER HOSE IS CHARGED AND ADVANCED TOWARD FIRE

Once water is in the hose and you can't reach the fire area, your actions require a little more practice and preparation for success. You should first call for more hose. Just as we discussed in the uncharged scenario, you must have hose on the apparatus available and packaged for rapid deployment in this situation.

Once water is in the hose, this problem is a little more complicated. You may have to shut down the line, break it, and add more hose if you don't have break-apart nozzles. If you have break-apart nozzles, you should also call for a spare nozzle and shutoff. It is still best to add hose toward the end of the stretch to provide for quicker water on the fire and not having to restretch additional hose over great distances.

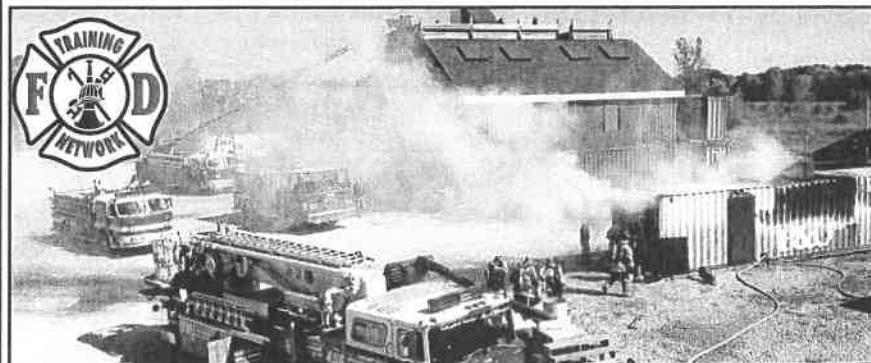
The methods to get hose to the end of the line are the same as if it were dry; the only thing you need to consider is making sure you retreat to a safe location (back to hallway with apartment door control, a protected stairwell in a multiple dwelling, or retreating to the floor below or exterior of the fire building/area).

You Don't Have to Abandon Ship

While waiting on hose, if you encounter fire conditions that you can cool or put some water on, it's OK to apply water to the fire area until your spare hose arrives. Your first efforts should revolve around trying to isolate the fire area. You can do this by shutting a door or removing a door remote from the fire area to cover the opening to the fire area. Additionally, a repurposed door, building feature, or wall can also be used to bank water into the fire area.

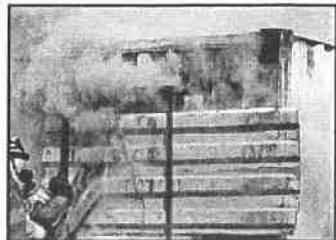
By having a problem solving mentality, you can keep the fire in check and keep applying water until the extra hose is ready. Once you have the additional hose, retreat to a safe refuge area, shut down the nozzle, remove the tip, add the needed lengths of hose and new nozzle, and redeploy the line to combat the fire. If you extend the line by removing a tip on a break-apart shutoff and adding

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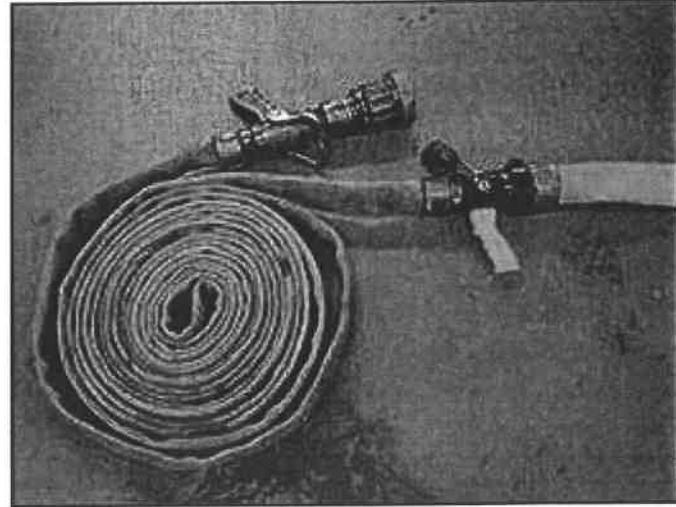
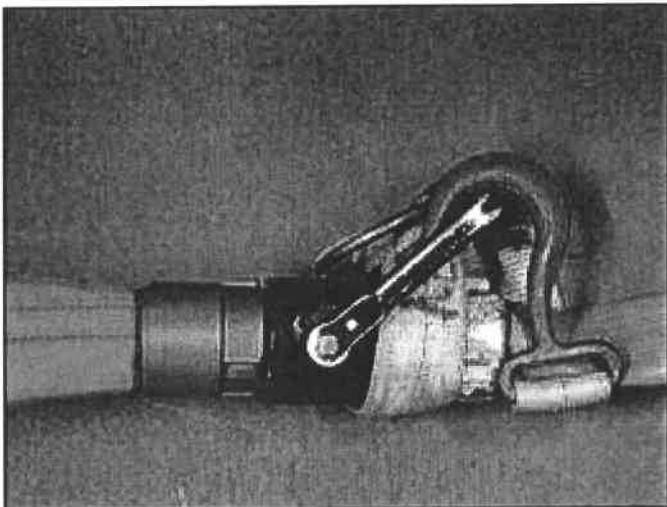


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more hose and nozzle from that point, leave someone at the control shut-off or strap it in the open position so it doesn't get shut off during the readvance.

IT'S NOT JUST A 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -INCH PROBLEM

Extending fire lines isn't just isolated to the first line stretched from a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hose bed. You can have issues where you come up short on a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch stretch from the apparatus or from a standpipe riser.

We carry adapters that allow us to go from the 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch threads on our shutoffs to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch male threads to extend a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch line with more 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch from the nozzle. Again, you would need another nozzle and shutoff at the control point. Additionally, your 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch shutoff can be used to extend a fire line with 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hose after knock down of large quantities of fire with a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch for mop-up or to search for and extinguish extension fires.



BE A PROBLEM SOLVER

This is an issue that shouldn't become a failure point on the fireground. Sure we have not been 100 percent effective and we are all human beings prone to mistakes; however, the truly prepared firefighter will know what to do to overcome this type of problem. Always be on your "A" game and have plan B, C, or D in your playbook in the event a situation such as this arises. Be able to think on your feet, adapt, and solve the problem without a lot of drama and loss of control.

The best way to prepare your troops is to give them this problem while training on fireground operations. Sure you have to discuss how you will overcome problems and drill on equipment needed and methods to adapt before putting it to the test, but once that's mastered, do these evolutions without notice as to what curveball you're throwing at the troops. It's not hard to set up evolutions in which you stretch short or lose water pressure and have to react and overcome the problem. Solving these problems takes practice and cannot be practiced or perfected without putting your hands on the hose and adapters to make it work.

Don't be defeated on the fireground because of simple issues that can be overcome. The best way to be prepared and not have a short stretch is to master deployment of fire lines before the fire. Practice sizing up stretches regularly, stretch hose regularly, get into buildings regularly, and be proactive so you don't have to be reactive and adaptive on the fireground when you are inefficient in your deployment.

Article originally appeared in Fire Rescue Magazine.



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

THERMAL IMAGING SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Andrew Brassard – Milton, Ontario, Fire Department

Thermal Imaging Cameras (TIC) are relatively new tools in our firefighting arsenal and have proven their worth on the fireground time and time again.

Over the last decade of use, several bad habits have emerged with the use of TICs that have caused problems and have gotten firefighters into trouble while operating at emergencies and fires. These problems have become known as *The Seven Deadly Sins of Thermal Imaging*.

STANDING OR WALKING

This is probably the biggest sin committed when using a TIC, the reason is simple... People tend to associate the ability to see with safety. It's also much easier to walk than crawl so people tend to go with what is easy. The problem with walking while using the TIC is that your depth perception is severely altered. This can cause you to trip over items or down stairs inside a building even though they can be seen with the naked eye.

A simple demonstration of this can be done by placing a pencil on a table and by only looking through the view screen on the TIC and trying to pick the pencil up, you will see that it can be more difficult than you might think.

ADVANCING AT INAPPROPRIATE SPEEDS

Often with the ability to see firefighters tend to advance at inappropriate speeds, this can lead to firefighters getting sloppy with there traditional search techniques or even getting separated from one another. When moving too fast

firefighters can miss things such as windows or doors and in extreme cases, victims trapped inside have been missed also.

Another large problem with advancing too quickly is that landmarks and keeping your bearings of where you are in the building can be missed. If your camera runs out of battery life or has another malfunction, you can quickly become lost and disoriented in the building.

NOT TRAINING WITH THE TIC

Stop and think about it for a second... When was the last time you did TIC specific training with your crew or department? It's just not something that gets done often.

Being able to read and interpret the image is the most vital part of thermal imaging and is a skill like any other. To build these skills you must train on them and hone them to maximize effectiveness. Get out and train with your TIC, use it as much as you possibly can, this will help with your image interpretation and build your skill level with the TIC.

NOT CARRYING THE TIC

This is a very common sin that really there is no excuse for, yet every year firefighters get lost in buildings performing searches while their TIC sits in the apparatus. Building good fireground habits is vital, carrying the TIC for the small calls will only ensure you carry it for the big calls.

FIREFIGHTERS



MISINTERPRETING THE IMAGE

This is a very common problem and it is one that stems from a lack of understanding the capabilities of the camera and a lack of training. Several misinterpretations that happen with the TIC are:

- The camera will not give you atmospheric temperatures, it only reads surface temperatures.
- Emissivity. Shiny metallic objects reflect inferred energy extremely well, which makes it hard to get a good temperature reading off them. Shiny objects can give a false reading that the object is much cooler than it actually is.
- TICs cannot see through water or glass. Glass will reflect images, causing firefighters to mistake reflections of fire for actual fire before.

MISAPPLYING THE TECHNOLOGY

The TIC is a tool like any other tool we have at our disposal. Like most pieces of technology, they have a habit of breaking down when you need them the most. The TIC is at our disposal to ENHANCE our operations and not CHANGE our operations. Misapplication of the TIC comes from firefighters not fully understanding the functionality of the TIC.

One misapplication that happens quite frequently is that firefighters need to understand that the TIC is NOT an X-Ray machine. It can not "see" through materials, it simply reads surface temperature. If there is fire in the walls and you can see it on the TIC it is because the wall material has been heated which allows the camera to see it.

Another misapplication of the technology comes from not understanding the density of what is being read. If you have a fire in the walls and there is one layer of Sheetrock on the wall a fire will heat that one layer up fairly quickly creating a heat signature to be read by the TIC.

Conversely, if you have a wall that is double layered Sheetrock, it will take a tremendous amount of time for both those layers to be heated to the point of showing a heat signature. Even with a considerable amount of fire behind the wall it maybe undetected by the TIC.

Don't forget your traditional overhaul techniques. If you would pull the sheetrock down without a TIC, you should pull it down if you do have a TIC.

FORGETTING TRADITIONAL SEARCH TECHNIQUES

Searches while using a TIC can tend to become lax when companies don't stay disciplined and follow good search techniques. Victims that are under bedding, a pile of linen, or behind furniture can be totally undetectable to the firefighter using the TIC.

Quite often when searching for people trapped inside a building, firefighters always think they are going to see the perfect outline of a person when they find them inside the building. The reason for this is often that they did search training in smoke houses or burn buildings where the dummy was just plopped in the middle of one of the rooms. In reality, people are sometimes covered or partially covered by bedding or other stuff. In 2006, the Milton Fire Department (Milton, Ontario), rescued a man from a fire and the firefighter with the TIC saw the man's foot sticking out from under some bedding. You're simply looking for heat where there shouldn't be, and you need to investigate that.

The TIC is a fantastic tool but it is truly limited to the user's experience and interpretation. *Aggressive and realistic training will help keep you away from the Seven Deadly Sins of Thermal Imaging.*

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FIREGROUND OPERATIONS

HOARDER OPERATIONS

Tony Carroll, Captain – District of Columbia Fire Department



Companies responded to a recent fire in an area where they were familiar with the buildings and where previous fires were relatively easy work. This one was not. When firefighters got to the front door of the fire building, they could not get it fully open. It was blocked by a large accumulation of belongings and debris that was packed into the house. Fortunately, the lone occupant was able to escape and no firefighters were injured but the potential was great. *Hoarding conditions present a very dangerous environment to fight a fire in.*

SOME TIPS FOR FIGHTING A FIRE IN A HOARDING ENVIRONMENT:

- **SLOW DOWN.** This fire cannot be attacked with the same speed as a normal fire response. It will be difficult to locate the seat of the fire and conditions can change rapidly. It is best to commit only the necessary resources.
- **Don't crowd the initial hoseline.** If the conditions change and the crew needs to back out, their exit needs to be clear.
- **Always have a way out.** The residence may be so jam packed full of stuff that the normal exits (windows and doors) may be blocked.
- **Remove any barriers or obstacles.** Firefighters on the outside should remove any bars and open doors for inside crews to get out.
- **Be careful of uncoordinated ventilation.** Due to the heavy fire load and difficulty to get water to the seat of the fire any additional air may cause conditions to change rapidly. Outside firefighters must ensure inside crews are ready for venting.

These fires are very dangerous and have resulted in civilian deaths and firefighter injuries. Your assignment: research the Collyer brothers and their relationship to hoarding and identify what resources are available if/when you have an incident involving a hoarding house. *Go grab a cup of coffee and head to the computer; you've got work to do.*

Follow the DC Fire & EMS Mayday Monday at:
<https://www.facebook.com/DCFireAndEMS>



ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS

THE DENVER HOSEPACK

Dave McGrail, Assistant Chief — Denver, CO, Fire Department

In a previous article, we addressed the concept of proper weapon selection, and the critical need to choose and utilize 2½-inch hose for most high-rise / standpipe operations. Far too many well-intentioned fire officers, choose their high-rise / standpipe attack weapon based on a one-dimensional size-up. That is, they choose the weapon based on fire conditions alone. The fire conditions showing upon arrival may in fact be fire conditions that can be quickly and safely controlled by a properly supplied 1¾-inch attack line. However, and more specifically, that would be a 1¾-inch attack line, supplied by our pumper and pump operator (engineer), and within immediate reach of the fire area. Our most frequent fire, in a single-family dwelling, first floor, easily accessible by a 200-foot pre-connected attack line is a prime example.

However, we must be multi-dimensional thinkers as we size-up a fire problem, and make a conscious decision regarding weapon selection, especially at high-rise fires and standpipe operations. The critical factors to make a multi-dimensional decision are:

1. *Standpipe System Pressure*, which has a high probability of being Low Pressure.
2. *Modern fuel loads*, with their rapid heat release rate.
3. *Reflex time*, which will likely be significant at high-rise building fires, and any fire that requires the use of a standpipe system.

Put these critical factors together, and the synergistic effect will guide us toward accurate fireground decision-making. The logical weapon selection choice being our

high volume, low-pressure weapon, the 2½-inch attack line for most high-rise / standpipe operations.

So, as you look up from the street and see fire showing from a 25th floor apartment window, remember, you must be realistic, especially regarding your reflex time. What you see showing from the street upon arrival, might just be the *tip of the iceberg*. Because of significant reflex time at a high-rise fire, conditions on the fire floor could be much more significant by the time you get up there.

Given ample oxygen and fuel, the fire is going to grow exponentially, likely doubling in size every half minute. On your best day (or night), your reflex time to get to the 25th floor, properly stretch a line, get water, and initiate attack, could be twenty or more minutes. Remember that single-family dwelling fire we talked about previously? What if, at our next single family dwelling fire, we arrive on scene, the engineer (driver) sets the air brake, but instead of immediately going to work, we stay inside the pumper for 20 minutes. Ridiculous? Yes, I know. But the point is, what's that dwelling fire going look like with no fire department intervention for 20 minutes? Now put it back up on the 25th floor. Not so ridiculous, is it? Don't forget, your 25th floor fire problem is obviously going to require a standpipe system, and low system pressure is highly probable. There you have it, the multi-dimensional approach necessary for proper weapon selection at fires in high-rise and standpipe equipped buildings.

Keep in mind, much of our time and work associated with training on 2½-inch hose, is spent trying to convince

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

DENVER HOSEPACK...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

the masses that 1) we need to use it, and 2) we can move it. So, with that said, if you believe it's a necessary weapon, we must take the steps to make it doable.

In my textbook, I address several keys to success when using 2½-inch attack line. One of the critically important keys to success when using 2½-inch attack line is having a user-friendly high-rise / standpipe hosepack.

Specifically, a high-rise / standpipe hosepack should be:

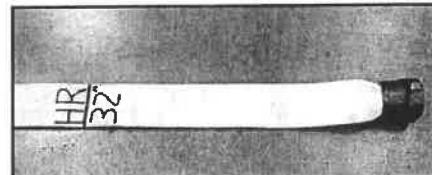
- Light weight
- Tight and compact
- Easy and comfortable to carry
- Easy and quick to deploy

The high-rise / standpipe hose pack used by the Denver Fire Department (DFD), the *Denver Hosepack* meets all of those criteria. The development of this hosepack started over twenty years ago in 1992. Since that time, the *Denver Hosepack* has undergone numerous revisions and minor alterations to enhance and improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Let's start with weight. The weight of a hosepack is one of its most important characteristics. Historically, many fire departments across the fire service have employed a one size fits all hosepack. In other words, there is often a very large, bulky, heavy hosepack, usually consisting of several sections of hose, and all of the other tools and appliances necessary to mount a fire attack using a standpipe system. There are countless gimmicks and methods on the "Web" suggesting how to carry and deploy a standpipe hosepack. In some cases suggesting that we cram everything, including the kitchen sink, into a large, body bag like container, and call it a hosepack. Have you ever weighed any of these ridiculous hosepacks on a scale? I certainly have. And in my research, I have found some of these hosepacks to weigh in excess of 100 pounds. Who's carrying these gigantic packs up to the 25th floor? Yes, I know, the junior guy. Or we have a dolly for the hosepack. What happens when the elevators are out of service?

Crazy!

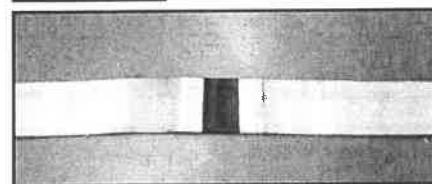
One of my recommendations regarding high-rise / standpipe hosepacks, is rather than having a so-called **one size fits all** hosepack design (*and one size does not fit all*), I recommend that you assemble, and utilize a modular equipment package. Specifically, the hosepack is not a single hosepack, but rather several hosepacks, and an associated standpipe equipment kit (tool bag) of which, a fire attack group, or team of firefighters, using teamwork,



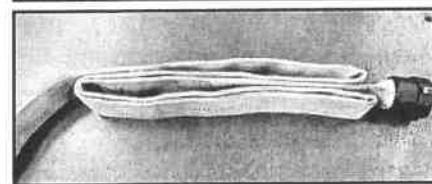
Step #1: Take a measurement that is 32-inches from the outside of the female coupling.



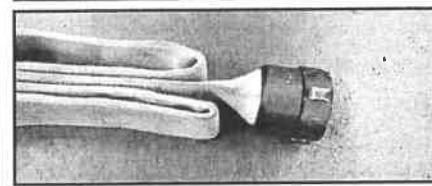
Step #2: Write HR for High-Rise and make dark line at the 32-inch point on both sides of the hose.



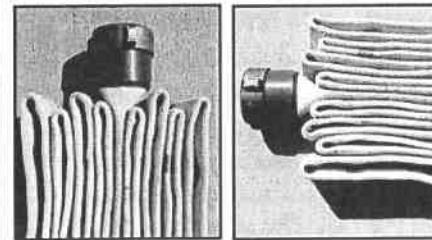
Step #3: Locate the center of the hose section (25?) and paint a large strip in a contrasting color.



Step #4: Start assembling the Denver Hosepack in a horsehoe type configuration.



Note: As you assemble the Denver Hosepack, stop short of the female coupling with all folds. This will help keep it tight, and compact.



Note: Once again, the folds should stop short of the female coupling and they should be staggered, one long, one short, etc. This keeps the Denver Hosepack tight and compact.

carries all of the equipment up to the point of operation, in small, manageable, and lightweight pieces. By doing so, we can take all of the necessary and appropriate equipment, but we are dividing the labor of carrying it up to the 25th floor.

Specifically, on the Denver Fire Department, a DFD Engine Company is equipped with four, 50-foot sections (total of 200 feet) of 2½-inch hose, all four assembled into "Denver Hosepack" configurations. In addition, there is a canvas tool bag, with all of the necessary and associated

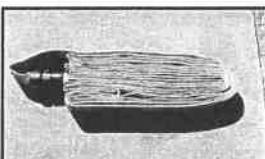
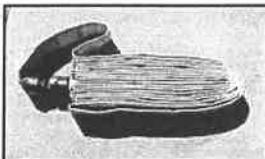


tools and appliances to safely and effectively carry out engine company standpipe operations. Keep in mind, not all four sections (hosepacks) will be taken into the building every time. Usually only three hosepacks (150-feet) are taken into the building, which can easily be carried by three firefighters, along with the standpipe equipment kit (tool bag). In addition, I recommend pairing your engine companies together, so two engine companies will work to carry the necessary equipment into the building and up to the point of operation, and then stretch, charge, and advance the attack line.

To properly assemble the *Denver Hosepack*, you start out 32-inches from the outside of the female coupling. At this point you bend the hose, and start assembling the hosepack into a horse-shoe type configuration. It is important to stop your hose folds short of the coupling, and don't go past the coupling. In addition, the folds should be staggered, one long, one short, similar to the old style accordion hose bed load. This helps keep the hosepack tight and compact (See photos on previous page).

When you have made all of the folds and come to the end of the hose, you should ensure that the male coupling ends up on the opposite side of the hosepack from the female coupling. At this point, you should have enough excess hose to attach the male to the female coupling, and tighten, but only a couple of turns is necessary. This serves primarily, to protect the male threads from damage during our day to day operations, such as carrying hosepacks, numerous times in and out of buildings on fire alarms, burnt food, etc.

Lastly, most of the time, you may have some extra hose left over after making all of the folds and attaching the couplings. This extra hose, or slack in the hose, is pulled back to the opposite side of the hosepack, and tucked back



Step #5: When you reach the end of the hose and the male coupling, attach the male and female couplings together, but only a couple of turns. Don't fully tighten the couplings. This will protect the male threads during day-to-day operations.

Step #6: Any extra hose should be pulled around to the opposite side of the hosepack, and tucked back into the hosepack between two folds.

Note: Keep the Denver Hosepack as tight and compact as possible throughout the assembly process.

into the hosepack between folds. This keeps the extra hose captured tightly into the hosepack, and prevents it from coming loose during transport.

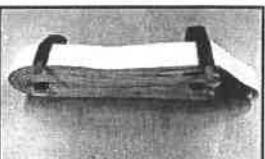
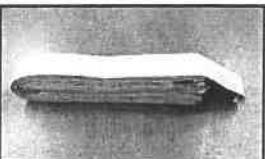
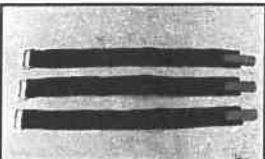
The *Denver Hosepack* is held together and finished using three, lightweight Velcro straps. Keep it simple here, and once again, avoid crazy gimmicks and expensive gadgets that are all the craze out there. The very best lightweight Velcro strap in the industry was designed and is built by a Brother firefighter from the DFD. Firefighter Brian Jenkinson builds an excellent hosepack strap. It is reasonably priced (lower cost than any other straps I have seen out there), and it is very durable.

Brian can be contacted at: turningoutsolutions@comcast.net

I'm not Brian's marketing director, but just someone passing out resource information. The strap in question is the 24-inch long, red tab strap, designed for use with 2 ½-inch high-rise / standpipe hose packs (the Denver Hosepack).

Always rotate the finished hosepack up onto the flat side before attaching the hosepack straps. Doing this makes it easier to attach the straps properly. Specifically, it allows you to use your body weight to push down on the hosepack, compressing the folds, and makes the hosepack as tight and compact as possible, before attaching the hosepack straps. Ultimately, the hosepack straps will be very tight.

The three straps are placed on the *Denver Hosepack*, with two at the bottom of the hosepack, one on each side, and one near the top, on the same side as the male coupling end of the hose. This is very important, remember;



To hold the Denver Hosepack tightly together, the DFD uses three (3) lightweight, velcro hosepack straps. The 24" Denver Hosepack Straps can be purchased by contacting Brian Jenkinson at turningoutsolutions@comcast.net

Step #7: Rotate the assembled Denver Hosepack off the edges, and up onto the flat side of the hose before attaching the Hosepack straps. This gives better leverage and allows for the straps to be applied tightly.

Step #8: Two Hosepack Straps should be applied on the male coupling side of the Denver Hosepack.

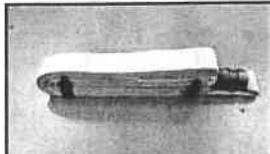
One Hosepack Strap is applied near the top (L) of the Denver Hosepack.

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TRAINING SAVES LIVES

DENVER HOSEPACK...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

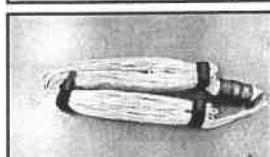
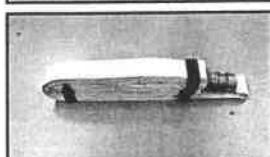


place two straps on the male coupling side, one near the top of the hosepack and one at the bottom.

When placing the straps, remember to always place the bottom straps as close to the end of the hose as possible. This procedure will keep the hosepack tight and compact, and ensure that hose folds at the bottom don't come loose and cause the hosepack to start coming apart before deployment. Also, train your firefighters to orient the straps in the same position when placing them on the hosepack. This makes it easier to quickly remove the straps during deployment, thus cutting additional seconds from our overall reflex time. A few seconds might not seem like much, but several seconds, here and there, add up to perhaps shaving minutes from our reflex time, thus, we get water on the fire faster.

Step #9: Flip the Denver Hosepack over, once again, on the flat side.
Step #10: Attach the third and final Hosepack Strap on the bottom of the female coupling side, as close to the folds as possible.
The Hosepack Straps should be applied in the same manner for each one so that they are oriented into the same position, and thus easily accessed when releasing the Hosepack for a standpipe stretch.

The finished Denver Hosepack, with two Hosepack straps on the male coupling side, and one Hosepack Strap on the female coupling side, all three oriented into the same position for quick access and release.



The other Hosepack Strap is applied near the bottom (R), as close to the folds as possible.

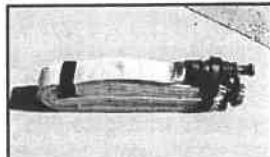
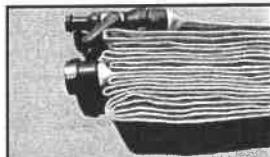
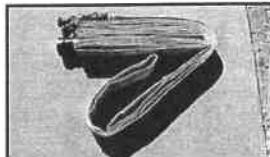
tucked back into the hosepack between folds

So there you have it. That's how to properly assemble a *Denver Hosepack*. Once again, just to summarize, I recommend a total of four, 50-foot sections, assembled into four separate *Denver Hosepacks*, with one of the four hosepacks equipped with a nozzle, pre-attached. Use the recipe of 32-inches from the outside of the female coupling to start the pack, don't go past the couplings with the folds, stagger the folds, and attach the couplings to protect male threads. Rotate the hosepack up onto the flat side to attach the hosepack straps tightly. Two straps on the male coupling side, one on the female side. Straps close to the bottom of the folds.

Give this a try, and let me know if you have any questions.

Below is a link to a short video to tie the whole thing together. Special thanks to the Top Shelf Professional Firefighters of Denver Fire Department Engine Company 3 who helped me make this short training video. Lieutenant Phil Miller, Engineer Tommy Martinez, Firefighter Jim Remley, and Firefighter Mike Aragon, the Best of the Best.

For the Denver Hosepack video go to:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_1YyptoUN0



One of the four recommended 50-foot Denver Hosepacks should have a nozzle pre-attached. The nozzle is attached and placed in the same, static location as shown in the photo. Extra hose is once again pulled to the opposite side of the Hosepack and tucked back into the Hosepack between two folds.

Note: The nozzle is placed in this static location, with the bail down and against the hose.

The finished nozzle section Denver Hosepack with two Hosepack straps on the male (nozzle) side of the Hosepack, and one Hosepack strap on the female side of the Hosepack.



FIREFIGHTER SURVIVAL

FIREGROUND MAYDAYS WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW?

Don Abbott — Command Emergency Response Training

Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!—the three words no incident commander (IC) ever wants to hear. But what do we really know about maydays? Most of us have never experienced one, which relegates us to learning about them through articles or reports on the subject.

After I made this realization, I decided to do my own investigation into fire service maydays. What I found was that no one is really tracking them—why, when and how are they occurring, and what the response has been. So I decided to pursue this information on my own. Most maydays don't get much attention unless they result in injuries or death. Therefore, there is not much information-sharing on the how, when and where they take place, or what the rescue results were. The more we know about maydays, the more we can tailor our training so that we can address the aspects of our job where firefighters are most in danger.

PROJECT MAYDAY

We secured a private foundation grant to study maydays, calling our year-long endeavor "Project Mayday." With the assistance of two individuals with PhDs in statistics and analytics—Dr. Venton Bennett and Dr. Jason Bebermeir—we assembled a three-part survey for departments wanting to report maydays. Our intent was to gather facts, not assumptions.

We obtained mayday information from departments in several different ways, and were assisted by state fire chief and firefighter associations. Both volunteer and

career fire departments were surveyed, and each group's information and results were kept separate. All the information received is confidential; we do not use department or individuals' names. None of the information is shared without fire department permission.

THE SURVEY...

The survey is divided into three components. Component 1 asks for general department information (type, size, apparatus, run figures, etc.). Component 2 deals with the actual mayday event (when, where, type and response). We also request reports, tactical worksheets, photos and audio tapes. As a result of Component 2, we've obtained more than 800 radio traffic tapes and 75 dashcam videos. Component 3 then asks for standard operating procedures (SOPs) and other similar guidelines used by the participants.

We will finish the project by forming a committee to make recommendations regarding the prevention of maydays and the improvement of our response to them.

The following information, for both career and volunteer departments, covers data gathered from the first nine months of the project.

VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENTS

Department stats

- 271 departments from 29 states reported maydays

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

MAYDAY...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

- 216 departments completed Component 1
- 177 departments completed Component 2
- 88 departments completed Component 3
- Total number of maydays: 177

Department size

The size of the volunteer departments was based on information presented, roster size and activity (as determined by each department). Of the volunteer departments reporting, 31 percent had a membership of 46–55 members, and 20 percent had a membership of 36–45 members.

Time maydays took place

Most maydays in volunteer departments occurred between 0001 hrs and 0300 hrs (19 percent); others occurred between 2100 hrs and 2400 hrs (17 percent). The first unit on the scene was involved in 49 percent of maydays, and 77 percent of the time, the unit was an engine.

Types of maydays

The number one cause of maydays was medical issues, primarily heart attacks (22 percent), followed by getting lost or separated from hoselines (19 percent), and falls into the basement or stairway collapse during fires (14

percent). It should be noted that many volunteer fire departments had no SOPs dealing with radio communications, or when maydays should be called.

Types of construction

Volunteer fire department maydays most often took place in residential type structures (63 percent), followed by commercial structures (23 percent) and multi-residential/apartments (14 percent).

CAREER DEPARTMENTS

Department stats

- 831 departments from 47 states reported maydays
- 719 departments completed Component 1
- 539 departments completed Component 2
- 327 departments completed Component 3
- Total number of maydays: 563

Department size

We broke down the size of career departments into nine sections. The largest number of reported maydays comes from career department with staffing from 51–100 personnel (22 percent) and 101–200 personnel (21 percent). Note: We only included personnel who were in firefighting positions.

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...Most maydays occurred when a firefighter became lost or got separated from their hoseline (25 percent). The second and third most common causes involved falls through the roof (22 percent) and falls into basements and stairway collapse (21 percent). Alarming is the number of maydays dealing with low air (13 percent).

Time maydays took place

Most maydays for reporting career departments took place between 0001 hrs and 0300 hrs (25 percent), followed by between 2100 hrs and 2400 hrs (21 percent) and 0300 hrs and 0600 hrs (19 percent). With more details in the final report, it should be noted that personnel who worked 48-hour shifts or overtime had a much higher than normal mayday occurrence in the last 12 hours of their shift as compared to a 24-hour shift.

Types of maydays

Most maydays occurred when a firefighter became lost or got separated from their hoseline (25 percent). The second and third most common causes involved falls through the roof (22 percent) and falls into basements and stairway collapse (21 percent). Alarming is the number of maydays dealing with low air (13 percent).

Types of construction involved

Residential type fires accounted for 53 percent of maydays, followed by multi-family apartments (22 percent) and commercial structures (25 percent). An issue that will be detailed in the final report is the stretching of lines of more than 250 feet into commercial structures, taking short cuts and not maintaining contact with the hoseline.

RESCUE STATS

Following are the most recent statistics on who performed rescues during a mayday call for career and volunteer departments:

- Another interior crew: 39 percent
- Crew of the person who called mayday: 31 percent
- Self-rescue: 18 percent
- RIT/RIC: 11 percent

It should be noted that many actual rescues did not have the required equipment to complete the rescue. All departments must be familiar with the types of rescue that may need to be performed and the equipment required to complete those rescues.

PROBLEMS OBSERVED

Our project uncovered many important facts about maydays, the most important of which may be the issues that contribute to mayday situations. Following are items that plague both career and volunteer departments:

- No 360-degree size-ups were conducted.
- Crews waited too long to move from offensive to defensive operations.
- 36 percent of all maydays took place in vacant or abandoned buildings.
- ICs tried to handle both the firefight and the rescue, instead of giving up one or the other to another chief or company officer.
- Firefighters changed radio channels too often.
- There is too much yelling and screaming over the radio.
- Many of the mayday victims express concerns after hearing who was coming in to make the rescue (physical condition of RIC/RIT team member or general abilities).

MORE INFORMATION TO COME

There's a lot more information from the surveys than what we provided in this article. We also have information gathered from the IC and the person in charge of the rescue; observations about how to report a mayday over the radio; and the length of time it takes the IC to respond to the mayday.

I believe that once all the surveys are completed, we will have a strong, realistic representation of mayday activities and therefore will be able to provide recommendations on how to prevent such events, as well as how to respond when they do occur. Until then, stay alert—stay safe.

TRAINING SAVES LIVES
FIREFIGHTERS

Source: Firehouse.com

**FIREGROUND SURVIVAL**

MAYDAY REALITIES...

These statistics/findings are from approximately 1,000 significant Mayday events that have been studied and evaluated in-depth across the United States. Additional information available at <http://projectMayday.net>.

FIREFIGHTER AGES:

50% of firefighters who are the victim in a Mayday are between 32 - 40 years old, and they had between 6 - 15 years experience: It's not our newest people, and it's not the senior Firefighters who are getting into trouble.

EMOTIONS:

During a Mayday event, yelling on the radio becomes an epidemic: Once the first person yells everyone seems to feel the need to yell as well. This re-enforces the importance of calm, clear radio messages all the time and training under as realistic scenarios as possible.

TIME OF DAY:

Most Maydays occur between midnight and 0300 hours, 50% of all Maydays occurred between Midnight and 0600 hours

Why? Most residential/civilian fatal fires occur at night, firefighters are typically at the end of their shift, they are asleep or tired, may be fatigued, etc., and all this consciously and subconsciously effects our decision making.

SHIFT:

73% of Maydays occur during the second half of (24 hour) shift...the second half of the shift is when we are

tired, fatigued or asleep...and when the run comes in it effects our awareness through fatigue.

SIZE-UP & REPORT:

Size up is key...bad (or no) size up = higher opportunity for a Mayday: When no on scene radio size-up was given by the first unit, the incidence of Mayday at scenes grew exponentially.

What is your on scene size-up policy?

What must be transmitted when doing that initial report?

Consider

- Unit ID
- Structure description/size/stories?
- What's showing?
- What's your strategy?
- Where's the Water?
- Establish Command: Where is command located? - Who has command?

360° VIEW OF FIREGROUND:

50% of Mayday events had no 360, another 23%, or 73% of all Maydays had an incomplete 360: Completing a 360 and announcing the results of that 360 is a critical fireground factor. When a 360 cannot be immediately conducted by the initial arriving officer, either due to size or related challenges, determine who will conduct it and how long will that take.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

**MAYDAY REALITIES...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9**

40% of 360's that were performed confirmed smoke/fire in a **different location** than what was initially presented with on the front of the building. What we see on side alpha is not necessarily what will see on side charlie.

WHERE IS COMMAND?

67% of Maydays occur where command is mobile (walking around, running around) vs in a stationary location. Many Maydays are happening early before a formal/fixed ICS / IC is in place so the Captain or Lieutenant of the first apparatus is command and operations. This has shown to be detrimental because the crew is now operating unsupervised and the incident isn't getting the incident commanders full attention either. This also re-enforces the importance of a stationary command post where someone(s) can watch the incident, track resources and monitor radios in a controlled environment.

COMPANY OFFICER ACTING AS COMMAND:

71% of Maydays, the company officer split from his crew and stayed outside to be IC: This highlights the importance of having supervision for the crews and the fire ASAP. Fire department command level response should be designed to address this and provide an IC early in the incident so company officers can be company officers. Departments should consider multi-chiefs on the first alarm of a reported fire, and consider auto-aid command officers as well.

FIRST DUE:

54% of Maydays occur to a member of the crew from the first arriving unit: First due crews got in trouble the most, then 2nd due, then 3rd etc: This happens because conditions are normally worse (and/or least known) for the first due company than the 3rd or 4th arriving, later arriving companies, who typically arrive to a different fireground-with hopes that ventilation has started, water may be on the fire etc. The first due company doesn't have all these advantages and therefore needs to conduct a good size up...and determine a clear understanding of what they have and what they are doing.

78% are the first two companies: So again first due company is 54% and the second due adds another 24% of ALL Maydays recorded.

OVERTIME SHIFT

A Firefighter is 62% more likely to have a Mayday on an OT shift: A lot of factors play into this, the firefighter may

be working with an unfamiliar crew, unfamiliar company, unfamiliar area, in a job or position they don't usually work (i.e. they ride the medic normally but today they are on the ladder), and finally: fatigue, lack of sleep , etc.

FALL THRU THE FLOOR:

61% of falls into basements were in finished basements with multiple rooms.

67% of all Maydays are some kind of "fall" event: This includes stair collapses, slips, trips, through the floor, through the roof, off the roof , etc.

Only 11% sounded the floor or roof before walking on it: Before you take a step know what you are stepping onto...make sure you have a light, tools, TIC etc.

TYPES OF MAYDAYS:

- #1 lost
- #2 fall from roof
- #3 fall into basement

A lot of documentation proves that crews get into trouble when they leave the hose line and become lost, trip, slip or simply walk off a roof, floor collapse, usually on the first floor where a firefighter falls into the floor below.

MANAGING YOUR AIR/SCBA:

Air Management Emergencies—firefighters took too long to exit and waited until their bell was going off, or even longer. Crews who ran out of air didn't retreat or exit when their low air alarm was going off and as result got in trouble. When the bell is sounding-it may be too late. Manage your air and exit **before** the alarm sounds

THE ROOF:

78% of roof Maydays were on peaked roofs, 61% the victim used or was using a ground ladder.

THE FIRE IS OUT, BUT....

40% of MAYDAYS occur during salvage and overhaul. This is where we typically let our guard down...the time when the fire is out but the best chances of collapses and other events occurring because of the weakened structure and *weakened fireground discipline*.

PROTECTION OF A HOSE LINE:

48% of lost firefighters are with crews operating without protection of a hose line (truck or rescue company searching ahead of engine company/fire attack).

**RADIO COMMUNICATIONS:**

40% of the Maydays where there was no contact with the victim they were found to have been on the wrong radio channel.

60% had difficulty transmitting on the radio because of radio traffic. **Stay off the radio** during a Mayday unless your radio traffic is extremely critical.

THE FISCAL COST OF A MAYDAY:

20% of Mayday events resulted in permanent disability or death. Most are spinal cord or head injuries. These permanent disabilities (182 Maydays in 2015) cost the communities 614 billion dollars. 614 Billion!

WHO CAN WE BLAME?

Of 182 Maydays with permanent disability, 97 have pending lawsuits against the Fire Department, naming Officers, IC etc. It's 2016: when things go bad, people get sued.

WHO RESCUED THE MAYDAY FIREFIGHTER?

22% self rescue by the Firefighter them self.

25% same crew that was with the Firefighter.

30% adjacent interior crew (another company inside).

10% RIT, RAT/ FAST TEAM.

The preconceived notion in the fire service that the RIT team rescues firefighters has proven to be untrue. **90% are rescued by someone(s) already operating inside the structure.** This fact highlights and re-enforces the importance in every firefighter being trained and drilled in "saving their own" procedures.

WHERE DID THE MAYDAY OCCUR?

38% Maydays occur in vacant/abandon structures. Know what structures are abandoned and pre-plan or mark them. In several Mayday events the firefighters had to force entry and then fell directly into the basement as they made entry because the floors had been removed by scrappers.

Bigger structure = more Maydays. More square footage creates more challenges, distance to reach the fire, more rooms to search, more twists and turns, etc.

The majority of Maydays occurred in single story residential structures with basements.

WHAT TIME DID THE MAYDAY OCCUR?

Most Maydays occur between 15 - 17 minutes into incident, or 7 - 9 minutes after arrival of first company: Most

Maydays occur during initial firefighting operations, this matches a nearby study that the Cincinnati Fire Department did after implementing their RAT (Rapid Assistance Team)...most Maydays occurred before the RIT team was on scene.

Do firefighter Mayday training at night, since most Maydays occur at night. Departments typically train during the day, but most Maydays occur at night when it's dark. Darkness affects our ability to see and work. Do training at night/in the dark.

WHEN DID IT OCCUR?

36% Maydays occurred when RIT was on scene and established: Again supports the data above that many Maydays occur before RIT is even established or on the scene, therefore the initial crews have to be trained for and able to conduct the rescue.

30% thought about calling the Mayday long before they actually did. This part of the study gets into the social and psychological part of the Mayday, many firefighters knew they were in trouble long before they called the Mayday for fear of being "that person" needing help, being embarrassed, etc. If you are thinking MAYDAY, transmit the MAYDAY—*you can always CANCEL the MAYDAY.*

MAYDAY TRAINING:

Don't make every Mayday drill a rescue event, have a body recovery, pull everyone out, do a par, regroup etc. Some Maydays are, tragically, recoveries so if all of our training results in a successful rescue you will never be trained or prepared for the transition from rescue to recovery efforts. This is by far one of the hardest decisions incident commanders have had to make at incidents.

SLEEP AND REST ISSUES:

Restful sleep vs stressful sleep. Most firefighters get stressful sleep at the firehouse, even if uninterrupted by a run, we are sleeping with one eye open. There is a lot of concern about sleep and rested firefighters, how that affects a lot of things...including Mayday events.

Firefighters who are in the second half of their shift or working overtime or working more than their normal shift have an increased risk of being a Mayday victim.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



TRAINING SAVES LIVES

WHO IS YOUR RIT TEAM?

Did you have confidence in your RIT team? Almost 70% said no. Who is coming to rescue you? Have you drilled with them? Are you confident today in their abilities? Most said no. This is an opportunity for training and mutual aid training as well when RIT is mutual aid.

COMMAND OFFICERS AND MAYDAY TRAINING:

Only 23% of Incident Commanders who ran a Mayday event had previously participated in Mayday drills with their crews. You can't run a drill without all the resources and that includes the incident commanders. If you haven't trained on it then how are you going to react when it happens?

RIT and accountability were established less than 35% of the time before the incident commander arrived. Again, more supporting data above showing us that Maydays happen early and often before RIT is in place.

34% of company officers said they knew that the firefighter who had the Mayday had a training/experience deficiencies prior to the fire. It was predictable! This is a bit scary and highlights the need to TRAIN MORE, especially if you have that firefighter. Don't allow that lack of training to be a "problem laying in wait"...a problem you know exists, but fail to deal with it.

COMMAND TOOL:

41% of Incident Commanders were using a tactical worksheet or board. Experienced IC's swear by the use of a command worksheet to help track and manage an incident. When a Mayday occurs it's too late to start writing things down.

AUXILIARY APPLIANCES:

Was the FDC pumped when available? 32% of the time yes. Why are we not pumping the FDC when we have a

fire in a sprinklered building? There have been several Maydays which resulted in firefighter fatalities in big box/sprinklered buildings.

COMMAND OBSERVATIONS:

Assign someone else to run the firefighter rescue ASAP. The same person should not run the fire and run the Mayday...Command needs to be split. Keep in mind that when there is a Mayday event, someone still needs to take care of the original emergency or things will get worse.

Expect emotional mutiny. React quickly and control freelancing. When something bad happens on the fireground everyone tends to run to help, it's a natural instinct.

Company officers and command officers need to control freelancing and monitor and track crews at all times so when the MAYDAY happens, it may be more manageable.

RIT STAFFING AND OPERATIONS:

60% of RIT teams had 3 or less firefighters assigned to the RIT. Other studies have shown that it can take up to 12 firefighters to rescue one firefighter. Is a three person RIT effective, a joke, or are we simply checking the box so we can say we had one?

Average RIT removal takes 19 minutes. Crews are going to be out of air, crews are going to be tired, crews will need to be replaced. What is your MAYDAY policy? Who does what? What does your fire dispatch center do and send? Is it automatic?

Article source: The Secret List. For more information from the study conducted by Don Abbott of Command Emergency Response Training visit <http://projectMayday.net>.

TRAINING SAVES LIVES

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APPLICATION ON BACK...

25 Operating Tips for Engine Companies

*By Jeff Shupe, Firefighter
Cleveland Fire Department*

Since the engine company is the most basic unit of service for fire attack, every member of every fire department should know the principles of engine operations and what it takes for an engine to arrive at a working fire, start water quickly, and maintain a sustained attack of the proper size and flow.

The following is a list of operational guidelines needed to get your engine company started in the right direction.

1. Engine companies function as a team with a mission: “To get water on the fire!”

Unlike ladder, squad, or rescue companies, whose members are assigned to cover different positions on a fire building (roof, outside vent, rear, floor above fire, etc.), the people responding on engines have the basic duty to attack and extinguish the fire. If engine company personnel do not perform their job by attacking the fire, the question is: who will? And if, for example, ladder company personnel find themselves on the nozzle, then their duties will not get done; and there will most likely be a delay in getting water on the fire. That could result in the loss of control efforts, greater loss of property, and worse — loss of life...be it civilian or firefighter!

2. Don’t block access to the fire building with poor apparatus placement.

As a general rule, ladder trucks should “command” the fire building. If the aerial device is to be used for firefighting, rescue, or as a means of safety – access or egress for firefighters, it is no good if it is blocked from the building by poor engine placement. Personnel responding on engines must always keep this in mind. An example to illustrate this is when an engine is already on the scene, in a narrow, dead-end street. In this case, an engine second due should stop before entering the block so the ladder truck can get “into” the building. The second-due engine should consider backing into the block so that it may drive out to good water if a relay is necessary.

3. If an engine is responding from a station with a truck company and another engine is first due, the truck should lead the response.

Know your response district!

Know your dispatch assignments!

Know your approach to the fire location!

Listen to the radio!

4. Attack hose should be loaded with male couplings “out,” with nozzle(s) attached, and few or no adapters/appliances.

SIMPLICITY! Study the fire problem potential in your city or district. Look at the buildings you may have to "stretch" into. Load your hose so it plays out easily with a minimum of effort from the hose bed. Remember how to estimate how much hose is needed to reach the fire. Use nozzles that give you the best flow possible with a minimum reaction force.

5. Use a big-enough and long-enough hose line (1½-inch cannot extinguish a fully involved house!)

Most fires in dwellings and apartments are handled with one or two 1½-inch hose lines. One 1½-inch hose line can handle one, two, or maybe three rooms of fire. But this diameter hose will NOT extinguish all sizes of fires. Remember the acronym ADULTS, of which the late Andy Fredericks so often spoke?

Make sure you have enough hose to reach the fire area and a little beyond. The person on the nozzle should be responsible for having the "working length," which is about 50 feet of hose.

6. BIG fires require BIG flow. Apply in a big way.

Eight 1½-inch hose lines surrounding a large fire do not constitute big flow volume, especially if these lines are equipped with automatic nozzles. Large fires require heavy, solid streams with force and penetration to reach into the fire and get to the seat. Lesser or smaller volume streams will not have effective power to extinguish any amount of fire and will probably put you in a "holding or containment" position — known to many as defensive! (A standard fire stream from a 2½-inch hose is 250 gpm.) Remember, when using heavy streams to position them to cut off the movement of the fire.

7. Don't crowd the nozzle. Space yourselves approximately five feet apart on a hose line.

If firefighters on the hose line take their position, crowding should not occur. Too often everyone wants to have a "piece" of the fire-attack action — the officer or person in charge of the operation must guard against this.

8. Make every effort to keep the hose straight (approximately 5 to 10 feet) behind the nozzle to avoid kinking and whipping.

Keeping the hose line straight makes for a more manageable operation with less effort by personnel. Coupled with good "nozzle mechanics," this will give the attack team an extremely maneuverable hose line to work with.

9. There's generally more than one way into a fire building. Hose lines can be advanced up ladders or via ropes or through windows.

Coordination is the key, along with good strategy and tactics when it comes to getting multiple hose lines into a structure. Knowing when and where and how to do this evolution can put a hose line in service in another part of the building, quickly with minimal effort.

10. Support hose couplings on hose lines going up the side of a building.

GRAVITY – 24/7! It wants to pull that hose line back to earth. Another reason to check your hose couplings during annual hose testing. Do you check hose couplings at test time?

11. If you're stretching into an apartment building fire on an upper floor, use the "well hole" if present to minimize the length of the stretch.

If one standard length of hose is 50 feet, then stretching one length vertically should take the hose line up five stories. Remember, support the hose couplings!

12. Don't walk by any charged hose line that has kinks in it. Remove the kinks!

ALWAYS remove kinks in a hose line. One kink may rob the hose team of several gallons per minute. A few serious kinks may take away the amount of water needed to control the fire and keep the nozzle team protected.

13. Tighten loose or leaking couplings.

Lost water, more friction loss!

14. Learn your nozzle(s) characteristics and how to "sound" with a stream.

This is important, especially when operating in poor visibility and you need to find your "bearings" or things like walls or ceilings. When making a hallway filled with smoke and heat, open the nozzle at the ceiling first to control the hallway, then down and straight ahead in front. Listening for the water to ricochet may give you an idea of how long it may be. Listen to the power of the hose stream, also. Sometimes the person controlling the nozzle has to hold it close to his body because of no help from back-up and the pressure is too much to handle. In some of these cases the bale becomes partially closed. Even in heavy smoke conditions it is recognizable from its sound and should alert the nozzle operator to readjust the nozzle in front, so full flow can be attained.

15. Move (or "lighten up") the hose line with the nozzleman's command. Don't move the nozzleman into the fire!

People behind the nozzle operator, upon hearing the call for more hose, should not push hose toward the nozzle, but rather "feed it" to the team. If the attack team has to stop for whatever reason, hose pushed in behind them may kink or make the hose less manageable. Once again, try to keep the hose as straight as possible behind the nozzle team. Train together to see what it takes to "feed the line" to the nozzle. Find a building that has some long and cut-up hallways and stairways to work in.

16. If only the person on the nozzle is holding/supporting the hose, then your volume is probably less than desireable.

Unfortunately, this is too often a teamwork issue. Under fire attack, members of the hose team should be on the hose line relieving the nozzleman of any back pressure. If available firefighters are not helping manage the hose line, then the nozzle operator must do everything himself, possibly working harder than necessary. Consequently, the call goes out to "lower" the pressure in the hose line — which in turn will lower the volume of the stream. Not a good thing! Remember, it's gallons per minute that puts a fire out.

17. If heavy smoke and high heat conditions force you to the floor, cool the area to prevent flashover.

Don't worry about water damage, especially in this situation. The fire has already ruined things around you. Don't let it ruin you! Cover as much of the area as you possibly can, including over your head with a full flow straight of solid bore stream.

18. Gases igniting at ceiling level (rollover) are a preceding sign of flashover.

Don't play with rollover. In a few seconds, it's FLASHOVER!

19. Don't oppose hose lines, especially exterior vs. interior!

Opposing hose lines and/or the mixing of tactics in this manner may result in injury, death, or the loss of property.

20. The first-due engine should always look for its own water supply in the event the second-due engine doesn't make it.

It's good practice and procedure to "back yourself up" with a hydrant supply or other water source. Remember, in firefighting nothing is for sure, except....

21. If people assigned to engines are stepping "off" at the scene of a working fire (especially the first- and second-due engine companies) with hooks and axes in their hands instead of doing engine work, your department has organizational problems.

Engine companies are responsible for the "water work." If you want to break things, go to a truck company!

22. More lives are saved by the proper placement and operation of hose lines than all other life-saving techniques in firefighting.

Placing a hose line in service quickly between trapped occupants and the fire will act as the quickest rescue effort possible because you are now attacking the fire, creating a safer environment for the victim(s) and firefighters, laying a "lifeline," and removing the problem.

23. Know the VOLUME, FLOW RATES, and DISTANCES of your water sources.

A thorough knowledge of water resources available (*i.e.*, hydrants, mains, tankers, static sources, etc., and their limitations will make for a much more effective attack.

24. Your first-attack hose line should be placed to protect life and/or property from the threat of fire.

Follow your Incident Priorities.

25. The “drop point” for the working length is generally the floor below the fire floor or outside of a ground floor or lower level fire.

Each fire is different with different hose length requirements. Know how to estimate proper amounts.

The nozzleman should always have the working length in his possession — 50 feet of hose with nozzle. This is usually enough to cover the fire area and then some. Take this amount to the drop point and flake it out, charge it, remove kinks...move in.



Topics > Company Officer Development > Articles

A young fire officer: 4 things I learned

Making the jump from firefighter to officer in your 20s is challenging; here are some tips to succeed from one young officer

Apr 30, 2015

By Zack Bonnema

If you thought being a young firefighter was hard, being that young officer is even harder. I know because I was promoted to lieutenant at 22 with less than four years on the department.

I learned fast that being an officer was not easy. Yes, I had some hiccups along the way, but I learned from my mistakes and other lessons I was taught from older members and more-seasoned officers.

There are some good and bad things about having young officers. One good thing is that they are willing to learn, train and share the new things happening in the fire service. But the bad part is that they may be seen as lacking experienced, leadership and the full respect of their firefighters.

Here are some of the things that I have learned from being a young officer, or as people have said, "a kid playing officer."

Know the job

The first thing that all young firefighters looking at becoming an officer must do is learn to be a firefighter first. If you have not mastered the art of being a good firefighter don't become an officer.

When you have become that good firefighter, you are going to know what you will need to get the job done whether it be a fire, crash or a medical call. You will have those files in the back of your head to tell your crew to grab that tool, pull that line, and open that wall.

Becoming that good firefighter, or the go-to guy, will take a while, but it's worth it; it will make your transition to that next rank easier.

Keep learning

The second thing you will need to do is keep learning. This seems like a no-brainer, but I have seen people get a promotion and think that they know everything. Just because your helmet has a new color or front doesn't mean that you are an encyclopedia about the fire service.

When you get that new role in your fire department, it goes without saying that you will need to learn the officer duties. Yes, you will need to learn those rolls, but you will still have to learn about the fire service.

You still need to train and do drills with your crews — not only to train them, but to keep your skills up to par. I have seen too many people get the promotion and think it is all about the paperwork and all that officer stuff.

This does not help your crew; it hurts them. Don't get so wrapped up in being an officer that you forget how to be a firefighter because things are changing in today's fire service. Although I've been promoted to lieutenant, I am still online looking for new training classes or new research.

Respect your elders

You got the new badge; be proud of it. But, know that the respect is earned by you not pinned on you. Now you are going to be

that rookie again. That means earning respect from the crews, but most importantly from the older members of the department.

Don't push them around; you need to work with them. Approach the seasoned veterans and say, "Hey, I'm thinking of doing ...; what are your thoughts; is it good or bad?"

This will show that you respect them. Because face it, they have been doing the job longer than you. However, when push comes to shove, you need to make sure they are listening to you.

But being that young officer, you will need to keep building that respect and confidences with your crew. This will also take time, but if you are patient, stay focused on it and evaluate yourself on how it's going, it will happen.

Without respect and confidences from your crew and for your crew, you have nothing and you will fail.

Listen and support

Your crew wants an officer who will have their backs and who will listen to them. You should do this by always keeping their best interest in mind, defend them when they are under attack and applaud them when they do things right.

But remember, the fire ground is where you need to take charge and make decisions; it is not the place to listen and take input from people.

The hardest part of this will be learning the line between friend and officer. Yes, you are their friend, but when you have the different color shirt or helmet on you have to know when to be a friend and when to be the officer they need.

Ultimately, your job is to be the leader and to know what needs to be worked on to keep your crew safe and trained to the best of their ability so they go home at the end of the day.

About the author

Zack Bonnema has been with the Chaska (Minn.) Fire Department for almost four years, where he serves as the training lieutenant. He has almost completed an associate's degree in fire science. He is a certified Instructor I and helps instruct at the county's fire academy.

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CAREERS & EDUCATION**ONLINE
EXCLUSIVE**

25 Common Mistakes Made by New Fire Officers

BY DAVE MURPHY ON FEB 20, 2006

Traditionally, the fire service does not do a very good job of preparing its members for making the transition to becoming a fire officer. In most departments, the process merely entails "riding the seat" where making tactical decisions is the primary expectation of that person for a finite amount of time. During this period, the "sticky" problems of management are usually either ignored or "put on the back burner" until the regular officer returns to deal with it.

It has been my experience that this is not an uncommon occurrence. Most newly christened fire officers are literally "baptized by fire", not only at emergency incident but also when dealing with management related situations as well. As a rule, firefighters making the transition to officer are usually not given the proper training and tools necessary to becoming a successful manager.

In his book, *Common Sense Supervision*, Roger V. Fulton outlines the common mistakes most often made by a new supervisor. Please think of situations that you have encountered as I attempt to align these mistakes with the everyday complexities associated with fire service management. If you are a new or possibly a seasoned fire officer, look within, are you making some of these mistakes?

1. Makes changes for the sake of change - Most of us are afraid of change. On the other side of the coin, there are those that like to shake things up on a daily basis. This type of supervisor is an advocate for most any kind of change. The majority of the time, they are not willing to do the homework necessary to gauge if a major change is actually warranted and plausible. Basically, if it sticks OK, if not, we'll try something else. The fire service certainly needs to embrace innovative change for the better, but only after careful forethought and adequate planning.

Immediately makes drastic changes in discipline or procedure - There's a new Sheriff in town (the new officer with a shiny new gold badge), and here's how we are going to do it now! Sound familiar? Most of us have experienced this scenario at one time or another. As previously stated, a change may actually be warranted, however, a new officer would be wise to be patient, make sound evaluations and subsequent decisions not based on hearsay. Then and then only should necessary changes be made.

Was unable to effectively deal with people - Every fire officer position requires interaction with people, with both firefighters and the public. It is imperative that we give this person the communication skills that they will need to effectively do the job and portray the fire department in a professional manner. A departmental sponsored communication class would certainly be of benefit to all members.

Failed to take charge - The ability to assume a leadership position is literally implied (or should be) when you assume the role of a fire officer. Is this always the case? Is this a skill that can be taught? A fire officer does not have the luxury of not taking charge when it is uncomfortable or not convenient. Does your department's officer training program effectively address this critical element? If not, is it possible for a struggling new officer to be placed "under someone's wing" for some one on one instruction?

Made serious administrative errors - When this happens, someone has to clean up the mess that this person's either action or a lack thereof, directly or indirectly caused. Did this person not know or simply not care? Training (or possibly discipline) may be in order to bring this person up to speed. Paperwork, ever how dreary and time consuming must be accurate, timely and complete.

Tried to be "one of the guys" - Once promoted, an officer is no longer one of the guys. This person has been entrusted with a managerial role, and sooner or later, will be tried by one of their buddies. Every fire officer must understand that they have a job to do and they are expected to do it.

Did subordinates job for them - Many subordinates will gladly let you do their job for them. A fire officer's job is to supervise and assist when needed when your prescribed duties allow. If a team member does not know the proper way to do something, they should be correctly shown how or referred to departmental SOP's for further guidance.

Failed to delegate - As the work piles on, the new officer will eventually learn to do delegate. Again, their primary job is to manage. In reality, a good officer should always be training someone to take their place. Delegation of duties is a natural way to accomplish this task.

Gave no positive reinforcement to subordinates - An officer (new or old or in-between) simply cannot do the job alone. The most effective officers take the time necessary to praise their people when they do something right or go beyond what is normally respected. A little personal attention will pay huge dividends somewhere down the line.

Had an inconsistent approach to problems - Did you ever work for the company officer that brought their problems to work with him or her? This person goes around half-cocked all of the time; you never know what the outcome will be when a crisis appears. This is not a fun person to be around, is it? A wild-card officer should be dealt with early in their career.

Failed to listen to subordinates - Would we ever learn anything if we did not listen? A good officer will practice "active listening" on a regular basis, and they may be actually surprised by what they hear (and learn) from their crew.

Failed to solicit input from subordinates - A good company operates as a team. A wise officer will actually solicit input from the crew. When this happens, an officer that involves the entire team will operate more effectively and safely.

Showed favoritism to subordinates - Have you ever seen favorites played in your department? I would imagine the answer is yes for most of you. How did you feel when this happened? Favoritism is not the mark of a good fire officer.

Failed to motivate subordinates - Remember the two kinds of leaders? the positive one and the negative one? Which one do you want to work with? A good fire office will stand behind departmental values and never trash-talk the department.

Didn't address problems of subordinates - Firefighters are human and have problems like anyone else. We spend a great deal of time together and can usually tell when something is not right among one of us. A good officer will show genuine concern for those under them and assist when allowed to do so.

Failed to make timely decisions - Incident decisions are usually timely by necessity; can the same be said for non-emergency related decisions? Unresolved issues are constant weight that will eventually drag you down. A decisive officer will prioritize prevailing issues and then deal with them, one at time.

Failed to effectively utilize time - Procrastination is a very bad word, and a most effective stumbling block to good management. Officers must learn to take advantage of any slow times, marking things off the list. Ideally, they should anticipate problems and get ahead of the game.

Lacked communication skills - The ability to speak and write is imperative to success in any organization. Community colleges are an excellent place to hone your writing and speaking abilities. The modern fire officer simply cannot advance without a foundation built upon basic communication skills; this small investment in you personnel will pay huge dividends for both the individual and the department.

Did not know contents of required paperwork - This is a training issue that should be addressed before someone is promoted. Once promoted, a fire officer will be expected to generate accurate departmental specified reports. Good data is essential to adequate departmental funding, which ultimately affects everyone.

Failed to foster positive interdepartmental relations - A fire officer represents the department, and their support is mandated - not requested. If a wrong is noted, they should work through the system to make a positive change. They should never resort to being a negative leader.

Failed to document positive and negative activities of subordinates - Evaluations of subordinates is not always a pleasant job, but it is your job. A good officer will perform evaluations fairly and consistently and always document everything.

Gave only negative criticism - How does this approach work with you, not a very effective motivator is it? What's the old adage "scold in private, praise in public"? A good motivator will give praise as quickly as they would offer criticism.

Failed to deal with problems immediately - Have you ever had a tooth ache leave, never to return? Problems do not go away. The best approach is deal with them as soon as possible. It will be one more thing that is not piled on the plate.

Didn't know when to seek advice from or to advise superiors of problems - A good officer will anticipate problems and will not wait for something to blow up in their face. If help is needed they should ask for it, the sooner the better. As stated above, problems do not go away, they just become bigger.

Lacked knowledge of labor laws, contracts or procedures - We now live in a litigious society, a lack of labor laws and departmental Sop's can get any fire officer into big trouble; ignorance of the law is no excuse. It is the department's responsibility to make sure that their manager (fire officers) understands the law and they do not discriminate against anyone.

Being a supervisor in any profession will challenge anyone at one time or another. The role of a fire service manager is probably more demanding than most traditional positions. Mr. Fulton's list is quite extensive; for comparative purposes, I am sure that most of you can apply your personal experience and observations to the 25 Common Mistakes list. If you are currently a fire officer or aspire to be, you may be wise to look over this list from time to time. Don't be guilty of making these 25 mistakes, at least not all of them. You may not be able to change the fire department, but you can change yourself.

Source: *Fulton, Roger V. Common Sense Supervision. 1998. Appendix 3. Page 80.*

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LITTLE DROPS OF WATER: 50 YEARS LATER, PART 1

BY ANDREW A. FREDERICKS

As we approach the new millennium (remember, the new millennium begins January 1, 2001), a debate still rages over the use of water fog in interior fire attack. This debate has become more lively in recent years because of the proliferation of on-line computer users in the fire service and the ever expanding role of the internet as a forum in which to present new ideas or support old ones. This article begins with a brief history of the use of fog streams in structure fire attack. I obtained much of this information by studying the original articles, books, and papers written by three men generally considered to be the fathers of fog firefighting in America-Lloyd Layman, Keith Royer, and Floyd W. "Bill" Nelson.

FOG NOZZLE HISTORY

Fog nozzles and spray streams have been around for almost 150 years. The first United States patent for a fog nozzle was granted to Dr. John Oyston in 1863. During the late 1800s and continuing through the turn of the century, various articles appeared in fire service literature extolling the merits of spray streams. One of the earliest such articles, entitled "Extinguishing Fires," was written by Oyston himself. It was originally published in Oyston's local newspaper but was reprinted in the March 16, 1878, edition of the National Fireman's Journal (known today as Fire Engineering). Significant research in fire behavior and the use of spray streams for interior fire attack began in the United Kingdom and several western European countries during the 1920s-research that continues to this day. In the mid-1930s, Elkhart Brass introduced the first production periphery jet fog nozzle to the American fire service. Known as the "Mystery" nozzle, it was based on a nozzle designed by the Mystery Nozzle Company in Hamburg, Germany, some years before. The United States Navy and Coast Guard used a combination fog/solid-stream nozzle during World War II, although its exact date of issue may predate the war by several years. Manufactured by the Rockwood Sprinkler Company, and known as an "all-purpose" nozzle, it was available for both 1 1/2-inch and 2 1/2-inch hose and had a three-position shutoff that could produce both an impinging jet fog stream and a solid fire stream. It could also be fitted with a variety of extension applicators. It is still in limited use today by the Navy as well as several fire departments.

Despite their long history, fog nozzles were virtually unknown through the first half of the 20th century. The solid fire stream stood for decades as the unchallenged weapon of choice for structure fire attack by America's fire departments. Then, in 1950, it all changed. In the February 1945 issue of Fire Engineering, an article described the results of experimental shipboard fires conducted at the U.S. Coast Guard Firefighting School at Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. Entitled "Coast Guard Conducts Tests on Ship Engine Room Fires," it explained both the testing process and various

techniques developed for combating fuel oil fires in the confined machinery spaces of large ships using water fog (a decommissioned Liberty ship was used as the test vessel). While the article is interesting, its impact on structure firefighting tactics is not considered significant. It wasn't until five years later that the importance of the Coast Guard tests would begin to be understood. What happened in 1950 that so radically changed fire suppression tactics? The late Chief Lloyd Layman of Parkersburg, West Virginia, presented a paper entitled "Little Drops of Water" at the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) in Memphis, Tennessee, and in the process stood the fire service on its collective head. In his paper, Layman introduced what he termed the indirect method of attack to suppress interior building fires using the tremendous heat-absorbing properties of expanding and condensing steam, produced in great quantities by fog (spray) streams. Most of the theory and methodology of indirect fire attack was based on the Coast Guard experiments (Layman was in charge of the Coast Guard's wartime firefighting school at Fort McHenry), as well as additional testing conducted jointly by the U.S. Navy and other agencies in San Francisco under the project name "Operation Phobos." Layman continued his experiments after he returned to his position as fire chief in Parkersburg, where he began in earnest applying the indirect method of attack to building fires. Layman explained his theories and methodologies in great detail in two books published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): Attacking and Extinguishing Interior Fires (1952) and Fire Fighting Tactics (1953).

To objectively evaluate Layman's approach, we must be familiar with both the underlying theories and the specific techniques advanced in his books and other writings. First and foremost, the "indirect method of attack" is not an interior fire attack operation. Rather, Layman's methodology emphasizes that the fog stream should be remotely injected into the fire compartment at the highest possible level with the nozzle held in a fixed position. The following quote from Attacking and Extinguishing Interior Fires could not be any more explicit in warning of the dangers personnel face from the large quantities of steam created during an indirect attack: "An indirect attack should always be made from positions that will enable personnel to avoid injuries from superheated smoke and live steam." Layman continued by stating that "if possible and practical, an indirect attack should be made from positions outside the involved building." In other words, he advocated that fog streams be directed through window openings because of the voluminous quantities of steam created within the fire building. Layman went so far as to discourage the use of doorways for fog application, as the outflow of scalding steam would be extremely debilitating to the nozzleman. In addition to remote injection of the water fog, there are two other requirements for success when using the indirect method. First, the ceiling temperature within the fire compartment must be at least 1,000°F to ensure ready and efficient conversion of the fog spray to steam. When a fire is in the first or early second phase of development, the direct method of attack with timely and adequate ventilation is preferred. Second, the fire compartment (building) must be well sealed to prevent premature leakage of valuable steam to the outside. A well ventilated fire building on the fire department's arrival warrants a direct attack, since the indirect method is only effective if the fire building remains sealed with doors and windows intact. Layman also stated that "where the major area of involvement is on upper floors, it may be possible and practical to attack

from an interior stairway below the involved floor." He continued by warning that "the nozzleman may have to discontinue the attack temporarily to avoid the downward movement of heated smoke and steam."

THE NATIONAL EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

Shortly after "Little Drops of Water" was published, the Exploratory Committee on the Application of Water was formed to evaluate fire extinguishment techniques using fog and spray streams. Perhaps better known as the National Exploratory Committee or, more simply, the National Committee, it was comprised of fire chiefs, training officers, and members of fire insurance rating organizations and was created "to bring some badly needed light to a very foggy subject." Beginning in 1951, the National Committee began conducting instrumented live fire tests to collect hard data on the growth and behavior of interior fires and the most effective methods of attacking these fires using water or, more specifically, water fog. Throughout the 1950s, tests were conducted under the auspices of the National Committee and independently by various fire departments, as well as the National Board of Fire Underwriters (NBFU), Underwriters Laboratories, and other research institutions. It was the research work of two individuals, however, that has had the most long-standing impact on the fire service.

Beginning in 1951 and continuing for more than three decades, Keith Royer and the late Floyd W. "Bill" Nelson headed the firemanship training program at Iowa State University's Engineering Extension. With the resources available to them at Iowa State, as well as through their membership on the National Committee, they helped collect and analyze data from literally hundreds of experimental fires. Their efforts provided the nation's fire service with a much better understanding of interior fire behavior and the mechanisms of fire extinguishment using water. Among their many contributions, Royer and Nelson developed a formula for estimating, with a high degree of accuracy, the amount of water required to control an interior fire based on the following: a) the amount of heat liberated by common fuel materials burning in ordinary air within a compartment, b) the extinguishing (heat absorbing) capacity of water, and c) the cubic foot volume of the fire compartment. In the "critical rate of flow" formula, as it came to be known, Royer and Nelson determined that the amount of water (expressed in gallons per minute) needed to control (not completely extinguish) a fire in the largest open space within a structure can be determined by dividing the cubic foot volume of the space by 100. Royer and Nelson explained the formula and its scientific basis in Engineering Extension Service Pamphlet #18 "Water for Fire Fighting-Rate of- Flow Formula" (1959, Iowa State University). They also introduced the fire service to a fire extinguishment technique they called the "combination method of attack."

THE COMBINATION ATTACK

Several factors must be considered to execute a successful combination attack. Chief among them is that, like the indirect method of attack, the combination attack was designed primarily for exterior application of the water. Remember, turnout clothing in use during the 1950s and 1960s lacked the thermal protective qualities of modern fabrics. In addition, many fire departments had few, if any, self-contained breathing masks available. These facts, coupled with the large amounts of steam produced during

a combination attack, necessitated an exterior application of water fog whenever possible. If a fire had to be attacked from an adjoining room or hallway, or if multiple rooms were involved in fire and exterior application of the stream were impractical, Royer and Nelson cautioned that a very narrow fog stream should be used to begin the attack. The narrowest fog stream is, of course, a straight stream, which would cause the least disruption to the thermal balance.

In addition to Engineering Extension Service Pamphlet #18, Royer and Nelson's discoveries were published in two Fire Engineering articles. "Water for Fog Fire Fighting-How Much and How to Apply It!" (August 1959) described the combination attack but did not specifically identify it. "Using Water as an Extinguishing Agent: Part 2-Utilizing Heat" (November 1962) contrasted and explained in some detail the various methods of structure fire attack-direct, indirect, and combination. But three films produced by Iowa State University-The Nozzleman (1959); Coordinated Fire Attack (1960); and, to a lesser extent, Where's the Water? (1971) introduced the vast majority of firefighters to the combination method of attack. To initiate a combination attack, first select an opening(s) for stream application. Adjust the size of the fog pattern (discharge cone) based on the approximate dimensions of the fire compartment. Next, thrust the nozzle about an arm's length through the opening into the fire compartment and rotate it as violently as possible with a clockwise motion.

Speaking to the lack of personal protective equipment during the 1950s and 1960s, Royer and Nelson noted that "to do this the nozzleman must have glove, helmet and protective coat." During their many experimental fires, Royer and Nelson discovered that a clockwise rotation of the fog nozzle was required to drive heat, smoke, and flame away from the nozzleman. The objective of the combination attack is to "roll" the stream around the perimeter of the room, cooling the walls, ceiling, and floor with the outer edge of the stream while the inner portion of the stream cools hot gases being produced by the fire. Striking the heated ceiling, walls, and fuel materials produces the maximum amount of steam within the shortest period of time. If the rate of flow is sufficient and the water distribution is efficient, the main body of fire should be "blacked out" after no more than 15 to 30 seconds of stream application. By shutting the nozzle down promptly after the fire darkens, enough heat will remain within the fire area to permit the smoke to lift and afford the overhaul crews improved visibility and lower humidity. Royer and Nelson were very emphatic in their writings when discussing the importance of avoiding "overcooling" and managing the thermal balance to aid in ventilation and overhaul.

MISAPPLICATION AND CONFUSION

Misapplication of Royer and Nelson's methods began almost immediately. For example, the concept of managing heat-using the thermal balance within the fire area to advantage-was quickly lost on many practitioners of the combination attack. In a telephone conversation I had with Royer a few years ago, he said he was very surprised when he first learned how commonly firefighters attempting a combination attack were beset with poor visibility and often suffered steam burns. I believe the misapplication and confusion is attributable to several causes. One involves improvements in firefighter protective clothing and SCBA during the 1960s and 1970s, prompting more and more

fire departments to attempt interior fire attack operations. David Fornell, author of Fire Stream Management Handbook, believes that since the tactics depicted in the The Nozzleman and Coordinated Fire Attack utilized fog streams exclusively, many in the fire service became convinced this was now the only type of stream suitable for structure fire attack. Fornell described what he terms the "interior, indirect attack." Like the misunderstanding surrounding the combination attack, Layman's indirect attack was also widely misunderstood and improperly applied. Layman, himself, contributed to the confusion by including a single paragraph in Attacking and Extinguishing Interior Fires that stated a "direct" attack with fog nozzles may sometimes be indicated and that a 30-degree fog pattern directed at an upward angle is the preferred method. Unfortunately, he made no mention of the role of ventilation when employing this technique; and warnings about the dangers of steam burns to the nozzle crew, prominent earlier in his book, are conspicuously absent here. Fornell sums it up best in Fire Stream Management Handbook: "The interior indirect, or combination, attack as practiced by a large percentage of the fire service today was invented by the fire service itself to compensate for problems encountered employing techniques based on earlier self invented principles. Nowhere in his writing did Chief Layman present scientific arguments that advocated spraying water over firefighters' heads in a fire situation in order to create steam bath conditions. On the contrary, he said firefighters would be enveloped in a hurricane of water converting to steam."

WATER FOG AND LIFE SAFETY

While many an interior fire attack has failed when the nozzle team had to quickly retreat because of steam burns, the full impact of live steam on civilians trapped within the fire building remains uncertain. Studies indicate that when heated air becomes saturated with moisture, the opportunity for and severity of burn injuries rise dramatically. The Fire Protection Handbook (17th Edition), in discussing the impact of heat on life safety, states that "the effects of exposure to heated air are greatly augmented by the presence of moisture in the fire atmosphere." Studies by the National Research Council of Canada indicate that 149 degrees celsius (300.2 degrees fahrenheit) is the maximum survivable breathing air temperature and that "a temperature this high can be endured for only a short period and not at all in the presence of moisture." Insofar as Royer and Nelson's writings are concerned, there is no mention of the impact of steam on trapped occupants. In Fire Stream Management Handbook, Fornell writes in reference to the articles and films of Royer and Nelson: "In viewing the films and reading the results of their research, it must be noted that their tactics advocated application of water from outside the fire building. Though they did discuss interior application, the first priority in the Iowa method was to knock down visible fire before making entry. Mr. Royer says their testing did not address the problem of fire spread caused by applying streams from the outside of the building. The subject of life safety or the effects of steam on trapped victims was never addressed in the three films." In Attacking and Extinguishing Interior Fires, Layman states: "In answer to the question regarding the effect on occupants of steam from fog application, we can only state that we have not heard of any adverse effects." Layman continues: "Contrariwise, the much more rapid flame suppression with indirect application makes it possible to reach endangered persons more quickly so as to be able to remove them to safety and render aid as necessary." This statement,

which appears in the third paragraph on the third to last page of a 148-page book, does not specifically address the impact of steam exposure on trapped occupants. It simply implies that indirect attack may knock down the fire faster than other methods and allow quicker removal of any victims.

LAYMAN BEFORE FOG

Few members of the fire service know that long before "fog mania" swept the nation and confused a generation of firefighters as to proper structure fire attack methods, Layman wrote a book emphasizing the importance of the direct method of fire attack. Published in 1940, *Fundamentals of Fire Fighting Tactics* examines eight basic fireground functions that together comprise a tactical plan for the successful attack, control, and extinguishment of fires in buildings. I will limit this discussion to Chapter VI, simply called, "Extinguish Fire." Layman stated that "the most important factors in extinguishing a fire within a building are first-to locate the main body of fire, second-to apply [the] necessary amount of water or other extinguishing agent on the BASE OF THE FIRE." (The capitalization is Layman's emphasis.) Layman continued by providing a list of nine "principles and suggestions" for extinguishing interior fires. In examining this list, numbers three through seven are particularly interesting, especially in light of Layman's later writings. They are reprinted below:

-If possible, attack the main body of fire so as not to drive heat and flames into uninvolved sections of the building.

-Use streams of sufficient size to provide necessary volume of water, but avoid using a one inch stream where a quarter-inch stream would be sufficient.

-Direct the stream to the base of the fire.

-As soon as all visible flames have been killed, close nozzle; if the fire flares up, open nozzle again, but close it when visible flames have been killed.

-Don't direct streams into smoke-filled rooms. Wait until the fire has been located and the stream can be directed into the burning material.

These five principles are so sound and basic; they are as true today as they were when they were written 60 years ago.

THE DEBATE CONTINUES

In the past 15 years or so, we have witnessed a resurgence in the use of solid streams, or at least straight streams, as many firefighters and fire officers have realized that using fog streams inside the fire building is rarely a wise and productive action. The fire service has taken many years and detoured down many dead-end paths (remember high-pressure fog?) in reaching this conclusion. Many within our ranks still lack a complete understanding of the tactics and techniques developed by Layman and the Iowa State researchers. Others are just plain stubborn and refuse to face the truth. Sadly, unnecessary firefighter burn injuries and excessive property damage will continue as net results of this situation. Recently, researchers in the United Kingdom and Sweden introduced the American fire service to the idea of "offensive" water fog application. This has generated still more confusion, and the debate over "fog" vs. "solid" shows no signs of abating. Part 2 of this article will analyze offensive fog techniques as well as Class A foams and other "advancements" in our ability to control and extinguish interior fires.

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LITTLE DROPS OF WATER: 50 YEARS LATER, PART 2

BY ANDREW A. FREDERICKS

As we learned in Part 1 (February 2000 Issue), the "indirect" and "combination" methods have been largely misunderstood and widely misapplied. By the 1980s, many fire departments, disillusioned by years filled with failed fire control efforts and painful burn injuries, abandoned the use of fog streams for interior firefighting. Some returned to solid stream nozzles that for years had been relegated to dusty shelves in fire station closets. Many others, heavily invested in fog nozzle hardware, instructed their firefighters to employ only straight streams during interior fire attack.

THE MODERN ENVIRONMENT

Today's fireground environment is far more hostile and unpredictable than it was in the 1950s. One reason is the endlessly expanding role of plastics. Plastics, being derived from petrochemicals (hydrocarbons), burn vigorously given the opportunity and produce large quantities of dark, acrid smoke. Plastics may be found partially or wholly in furniture, window treatments, clothing, toys, sporting goods, floor coverings, wall coverings, countertops, electronics, major appliances, housewares, and hundreds of other consumer products. Significant amounts of plastic are used in building construction. Plastics are often expanded for use in seat cushions, pillows, mattresses, insulation, and packaging materials. Expanded plastics (also known as cellular or foamed plastics) may pose a significant fire hazard. "Some reports tell of fast-spreading, high-intensity fires and voluminous smoke production". Many plastics used in interior furnishings and finishes are "thermoplastics." Thermoplastics, unlike thermosetting plastics (or more simply thermosets), produce flaming drips when they burn, which may flow and extend fire to uninvolved fuels. Pools of burning liquid plastic generate additional quantities of smoke and flammable gases and make firefighting more hazardous. One firefighter from a busy engine company in the South Bronx inadvertently knelt on a molten plastic TV cabinet and was severely burned. He had to undergo multiple skin grafts and extensive rehabilitation.

Buildings today further contribute to the hazard because they are often well sealed and limit the opportunity for heat loss. A fire growing within a compartment (room) that loses little heat to the outside will become hotter faster and build up large quantities of toxic gases more quickly than a fire in a less insulated room of similar size. The widespread installation of wall and attic insulation, draft barriers, membrane roofing systems, and energy-efficient windows in new construction and renovations plays a significant role in the subtle (and not so subtle) changes in interior fire behavior that have been observed during the past two decades. Probably the most significant factor is the energy-efficient window (EEW). These windows, often called thermal pane windows, do not fail as readily as older, single-glazed windows. As a result, the highly heated, sooty smoke

characteristic of today's plastic filled fire environment, since it cannot escape, will quickly fill the fire occupancy. Firefighters today routinely encounter brutal head conditions and, more and more frequently, a complete absence of visible fire. This phenomenon has been termed "black fire."

BLACK FIRE

A firefighter from a busy Bronx, New York, engine company related to me the following story. He was assigned as the nozzleman for the tour. His company arrived first due at a fire in a renovated multiple dwelling. On entering the fire apartment with a charged handline, he noted that heat conditions were severe and the apartment was filled with dense smoke. Unable to quickly locate the seat of the fire and anticipating that flashover was imminent, his officer ordered him to open the nozzle. As he directed the stream into the blackness, conditions improved somewhat, and the line was advanced through the apartment. The officer then ordered the nozzle shut down. As the smoke began to lift, he realized he was kneeling in the middle of the fire room! He stated that throughout the fire attack, he never saw so much as a lick of flame despite a well-advanced fire.

A friend of mine, a very experienced firefighter, described to me the next incident: At a recent training exercise in an acquired structure, student firefighters were preparing to advance a charged handline through the kitchen and extinguish a fire at the far end of the adjoining living room. He was assigned as the engine company officer to coach the students through the exercise and ensure their safety. The fuel materials consisted of an upholstered sofa on end, one or two seat cushions, and cardboard as kindling. After the fire was lit, he entered the house to check on fire conditions and verify that the ignition officer was safely removed to the outside. From the doorway between the kitchen and living room, he noted that flames were starting to roll across the living ceiling, but visibility was still good, and nothing seemed out of the ordinary. He then duck walked the 15 feet back to the entrance door and instructed the student firefighters to bring the line inside. In less than a minute, conditions in the kitchen and living room had changed drastically. Almost all visibility was lost, and dark smoke was banked down to within two feet of the floor in the kitchen and to within an inch or two in the living room. As they advanced the line into the living room, he was unable to see even a hint of fire at ceiling level. With a high heat condition and the very real threat of flashover, he told the nozzleman to open the line. This action more than likely saved them from severe burn injuries.

I had an experience at a private dwelling fire several years ago that is eerily similar to the incidents described above. The occupants of an older, 2 1/2 -story, two-family home reported a smoke condition in the attic. We brought a charged handline up the stairs to the attic and were met with heavy, dark smoke. With no visible fire and a moderate heat condition, I thought the fire might be behind a knee wall or above a finished ceiling, but there were no void spaces present. Heat levels continued to increase. Crouching down, I could feel a significant amount of heat on my thighs and groin area (I was wearing a protective hood but only 3/4-length boots). After inching ahead slowly, I caught a glimpse of what looked like glowing coals at floor level. I opened the nozzle, sweeping the ceiling and floor. We then advanced the line toward the front of the house (the attic

stairs were closer to the rear), and I was able to vent the attic through a small window that had remained intact during the fire. The fire itself involved a foam mattress and some clothing, which explains the dense smoke and intense heat. Because of the confinement of the fire in the attic with its limited ventilation opportunities, we most likely encountered a fire in the third (smoldering) stage of development. Because we entered the attic from below, the pressure of the heated gasses initially prevented intrusion of any significant additional oxygen. But had I not opened the line when I did, I believe it would have been just a matter of time before the attic would have "lit up" in flames.

COMPARTMENT FIRES

One recent *Fire Engineering* article cited a scientific principle known as "Thornton's Rule" as the basis for concluding that fires today are no more challenging and dangerous than in the past. I disagree with this conclusion and believe that the widespread use of plastics has significantly increased the hazards posed by interior fires. Let's examine Thornton's Rule, not from a theoretical, laboratory perspective but from one grounded in the reality of the fire floor. We'll begin by comparing the heat energy potential of various plastics vs. more traditional fuel materials. The heat of combustion (heat energy potential) of plastics is tremendous and ranges from approximately 16 kJ/g for polyvinyl chloride (PVC) to approximately 41-46 kJ/g for polystyrene and high-density polyethylene. Both polystyrene (rigid and expanded) and polyethylene are widely used in consumer goods and building materials. By contrast, paper, wood, cotton, jute, and other natural (cellulosic) materials have much lower heat energy potentials, in the range of 12-15 kJ/g. What Thornton discovered before World War I was that in any oxygen-regulated fire (compartment fires are generally oxygen- or ventilation regulated, whereas outside are fuel-regulated), heat of combustion will not vary significantly for a variety of organic liquids and gases. In the 1970s, further research by Hugget indicated that the heat of combustion for many organic solids is also relatively constant and is a factor of the oxygen available for consumption within the fire compartment. Although these laboratory findings viewed independently may indicate that plastics pose no more of a hazard to firefighters than the cellulosic materials of fires past, at "real world" fires, other factors (variables) add elements of dynamic complexity to the behavior of interior fires and suggest that the dangers faced by firefighters have increased dramatically in the past 50 years. These factors may be related to the fuel materials themselves (amount, flame spread rating, surface-to-mass ratio, arrangement, and heat release rate), the compartment (insulation, ventilation), and firefighting actions.

FUEL MATERIALS

Fire load (sometimes called fuel load) refers to the total heat energy potential of the combustible materials contained in a building (or compartment). Expressed in SI units as kJ/m^2 , under most definitions, the term *fire load* includes both the contents and any combustible structural components. As society has grown more affluent, families have introduced increasing amounts of combustible material into their homes and apartments. By some estimates, the average residential fire load is at least two times greater today than it was 50 years ago. Even if heat production doesn't vary significantly between plastics and cellulosics burning within a compartment, if the amount of

combustible material increases, so, too, must the heat energy potential. This might be called the "more stuff, more heat" principle.

Another important factor is flame spread. High rates of flame spread across exposed fuel surfaces decrease the safe operating time for firefighters before flashover occurs. The use of plastic materials as wall and ceiling coverings, as well as in furniture and furniture veneers, greatly increases the risk of rapid fire development and firefighter injury. "Very high surface flame spread rates have been reported – up to approximately 2 ft. per sec. (0.6m/s), or 10 times the rate of flame spread across most wood surfaces." But let's not forget that wood and other cellulosic wax and ceiling finishes also produce dangerously high rates of flame spread. Exposed wood surfaces, such as paneled walls, can contribute to rapid fire development, particularly when flammable glues or adhesives are used in the installation and the paneling itself is subject to delamination when exposed to excessive heat. In *Building Construction for the Fire Service, Third Edition*, Frank Brannigan details the extreme flame spread hazard posed by combustible acoustical ceiling tiles made of low-density fiberboard. Paints, coatings, and other surface finishes also play a role in flame spread, but to what extent is not well defined.

The surface-to-mass ratio of the fuel is another factor. Obviously, expanded plastics pose a significant hazard in this regard, but consider a rigid plastic form that is in common use as a storage place for everything from toys to videotapes to vintage record albums—the milk crate. Now commercially manufactured specifically for home and office storage applications, milk crates have a very high surface to mass ratio. Recently retired Fire Department of New York (FDNY) Deputy Chief Vincent Dunn believes that a variety of rigid and expanded plastic items, including several milk crates filled with toys, contributed to a flashover that fatally injured FDNY Captain James F. McDonnell in 1985. Another possible contributing factor in McDonnell's death was the arrangement of the combustible material (also known as fuel "geometry"). Consider the impact on fire growth and spread of perhaps two dozen plastic milk crates stacked five and six high or even nailed to the walls of a typically sized bedroom or living room during a fire. Filled with plastic toys or other items, they might be likened, in the words of one fire officer, to "bombs" of solid gasoline. According to Vytenis Babrauskas, Ph.D., a leading researcher in the field of compartment fire growth dynamics, the most important factor in the speed with which a fire reaches flashover is the heat release rate (HRR). Put very simply: "If the HRR is high enough, flashover will occur. If it's not, the fire won't reach flashover..." Fuel materials that have high rates of heat release, including many plastics, generate significant heat early in the development of an interior fire before fire growth becomes strictly ventilation-regulated and heat production levels off, "The heat release rate is important during the growth phase of the fire when air for combustion is abundant and the characteristics of the fuel control the burning rate". Cellular plastic items, such as foam-filled mattresses and furniture, are extremely hazardous in this regard. This is because of the characteristics of cellular plastics: They have a low density; they have very high heat release potentials; and they tend to liquefy and gasify (not char) when they burn. The *Fire Protection Handbook*, in discussing the heat release rate of upholstered furniture (encountered at virtually every residential fire and a major culprit in

the "black fire" examples described earlier), states the following: "The HRR of upholstered furniture can, in the worst circumstances reach values of around 2,000 to 3,000 kW (2 to 3 MW) in a very short time, only 3 to 5 minutes after ignition." The *Handbook* continues by noting that the hazard is extreme "since it only takes about 1 MW to flash over a room with a normal-sized door opening." While one can never predict with absolute certainty the outcome of any compartment (room) fire based strictly on the composition of the fuels involved, the higher energy potentials and high heat release rates of modern plastic furnishings and finishes make early flashover and severe firefighter injury more distinct possibilities. In tragic testimony to the dangers posed by interior fires today, between 1985 and 1994 alone, approximately 47 firefighters suffered fatal injuries as a result of being caught or trapped by flashover and other "rapid fire progress" events.

ENERGY-EFFICIENT WINDOWS

Consider the following quote from an article written by Deputy Chief James Murtagh of FDNY more than 10 years ago: "Fires in buildings with energy-efficient, double-paned windows will contain smoke and fire for extended periods. This leads to delayed alarms and the development of large volumes of extremely dense, pressurized smoke which will bank down farther than normally expected. If the smoke is hotter than its ignition temperature, but too rich to burn, it may ignite suddenly when sufficient oxygen is mixed with it; if the gas-air mixture is within its explosive range but below its ignition temperature, it may ignite suddenly when heat is added."

The widespread installation of double-glazed, energy-efficient windows has added so many complicating factors to firefighting efforts in New York City that procedural bulletins have been changed specifically as a result. Fifteen years of field experience with these windows at literally thousands of fires indicates that (a) they do not fail as readily as older, single-glazed windows; (b) in multiple dwelling and commercial installations, the resistance to failure is increased because of the use of heavier-gauge aluminum or vinyl frames; (c) because they resist heat-induced failure, they often hide the location of the fire from firefighters assigned to perform ventilation and search operations from ladders and fire escapes; (d) EEWs are extremely difficult to break with firefighting hand tools; and (e) once the windows do fail or are vented, fire conditions often change dramatically. For a more complete discussion of the hazards and problems posed by EEWs see "Energy-Efficient Windows" on page 134.

FIREFIGHTING ACTIONS

Because of the behavior of EEWs, many times the first (and only) ventilation of the fire area is the door opening through which first-arriving firefighters begin their primary search and advance the attack handline. Once this door is opened, anticipate a dramatic change in fire conditions. Consider the following example. An engine company prepares to advance a charged 1 3/4-inch hand-line through the front door of an apartment. A long hallway connects the entrance door with the fire room deep the "flat." Volumes of dark smoke under considerable pressure are "pushing" out the open apartment door and rising up the stairway. As the nozzle team disappears into the murk, flame begins issuing intermittently from the top of the door opening. The nozzle team,

unaware of these conditions, continues to advance down the hallway toward the seat of the fire. Suddenly, heavy fire is "blowing" out the top half of the door opening, and the hallway has turned into a mass of orange flames. The nozzleman finally opens up, but not before he and the backup firefighter have sustained second- and third-degree burns. What happened? The fire burning within the unventilated (or poorly ventilated) apartment described above is akin to a flammable gas factory. Large amounts of heated, un-ignited combustion gases (carbon monoxide mostly) outflow from the main fire area (maybe a rear bedroom) and accumulate in the adjoining rooms and spaces. When the door to the apartment is opened (a ventilation opening), these fire gases travel along the ceiling toward this outlet. As the gases reach the entrance door, they begin missing with ever-increasing amounts of oxygen, causing the vapor-rich mixture to enter its flammable range. With the door kept open to permit advance of the handline, the intermittent flaming at the top of the door opening is soon replaced with solid fire. As increasing amounts of oxygen flow into the apartment through the open door, the flames travel back toward the main fire area, feeding on the ceiling gases, giving the appearance of a lit fuse. Sometimes termed "vent point ignition," the entire hallway is soon filled with fire, and the nozzle team is literally fighting for its life.

One question that may be asked is why the nozzleman didn't open up sooner. While rollover (flames appearing in the overhead smoke layers) is a reliable warning sign of impending flashover, it cannot provide warning if it goes unnoticed. Flames in the overhead may not be visible because of smoke once entry is made into the fire occupancy. The full encapsulation and exceptional thermal protection provided by the latest bunker gear and protective hoods may prevent firefighters crouching below from feeling heat radiating downward from above. In this case, the nozzle man never opened up because he didn't realize the severity of the situation.

Another question concerns the position of the entrance door. Should the entrance door have been partially closed behind the advancing firefighters to limit air movement and delay or prevent flashover? In my opinion, once a handline passes through a door opening, the door must remain fully open to prevent any interference with the movement of the line and to allow an influx of fresh air to aid in ventilation as the fire is knocked down. During the primary search, however, the question is more difficult to answer and is the subject of much debate within the ranks of FDNY. A veteran lieutenant assigned to a busy ladder company in the Bronx believes that at apartment fires, the door should be kept closed during the primary search (not locked or latched, just shut to limit air movement). The calming effect on a growing fire that results from the simple act of closing the door behind you can be quite astonishing.

At a fire in a multiple-dwelling in the Bronx, the first-due ladder company initiated a primary search with the apartment door closed. To complete the search, the firefighters had to pass the fire room. A 2 1/2 -gallon water extinguisher (commonly called the "can," carried by all FDNY ladder companies during primary search operations) was discharged on the fire, but the "can" firefighter was unable to pull the fire room door shut. When the engine company officer opened the apartment door to check on conditions, the fire roared out of the fire room and filled the hallway, trapping the search

team at the rear of the apartment. As soon as the apartment door was closed, the fire retreated back into the room. This condition was observed again after the primary search had been completed and the handline was brought inside to extinguish the fire. The effect of open doors and windows is enhanced greatly during windy conditions. Depending on wind direction and velocity, extremely rapid fire progress may result. The fire service has an insufficient understanding of how wind and other weather-related factors affect fire behavior; much research remains to be done.

Another question concerns the issue of applying water on smoke. For years, it was considered taboo, but the volatile nature of the smoke produced by the contemporary fire environment requires that we rethink this approach. "Although this [applying water on smoke] flies in the face of traditional training, we must recognize that the fire environment has changed with the addition of plastics that generate high heat and dense smoke when they burn. This, combined with energy-efficient windows, may justify putting water 'on smoke' to prevent flashover in certain situations". While this tactic should remain the exception and not the rule, if you find yourself lying in a hot, smoke filled hallway and that dread feeling in the pit of your stomach tells you that something very bad is about to happen, opening the nozzle may very well save your life.

FOG, FANS AND FOAM

Part 1 of this article described our 50-year experiment with fog streams and the mixed success they've achieved on the fireground. Although fog streams did not turn out to be the "magic pill" some had hoped, the jury is still out on other, more recent "advancements" in the art and science of interior fire control. Specifically, I'm referring to positive-pressure ventilation (PPV), Class A foam, and "offensive" water fog techniques.

-PPV

Does PPV have a place? I believe it does, particularly during overhaul, to reduce heat and humidity levels and clear the fire area of smoke. It has also shown much promise when used to pressurize stairways during high-rise fire evacuation. During the initial stages of a fire attack, however, it poses several problems.

First among these is the danger of pushing fire into uninvolved areas of the building. Another is the potential for violent acceleration of fire growth. At one training burn in an acquired structure, the local fire department wanted to experiment with PPV. The action of the fan on the fire suggested that someone had injected atomized gasoline into the fire area. Setting up a PPV fan also requires that a firefighter or firefighters be taken away from other important tasks and, considering the staffing levels of most engine and ladder companies, this becomes an important issue. If vent-enter-search (VES) operations are employed. PPV will drive heat and flame toward the searching firefighters and cause severe burns and other injuries as they scramble to dive out windows and escape serious burns.

One investigator suggested installing small nozzles on the perimeter of the fan to blow a water mist into the fire area (similar to the cooling fans seen on the sidelines during football games in warm weather). This introduces the very real danger of steam burns

and is similar in effect to having a misplaced fog stream directed through a window opening while you are inside the fire building. As a result of these issues, many fire departments that practice PPV do so on a much more limited basis today than previously.

-Class A foam

The current buzz in "progressive" fire suppression circles is Class A foam. Class A foams are not new – they've been around for almost a century. Used in wildland firefighting for many years, they have only recently been introduced into the arena of structure firefighting. I am not disputing some of the advantages offered by wetting agents in general and Class A foams in particular (better fuel penetration and the ability to cling to vertical surfaces), but they are not quite the panacea some salespeople would have us believe. In a fairly extensive study conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) on the performance of Class A foam, testing showed that its most clear advantage over plain water was in the extinguishment of tire fires. In other tests, the advantages offered by Class A foam were less well defined. The NIST report also indicates that there are little quantitative data on the effectiveness of Class A foam vs. plain water in the extinguishment of interior structure fires and that more testing is required.

In addition to incomplete information on the effectiveness of Class A foam, there are other issues to consider. I hate to be a pessimist, but my experience with Class B foam systems installed on municipal fire apparatus hasn't been good. They often don't work properly when you need them, especially when they've been dormant for months at a time. And having been a firefighter in two paid municipal departments, a combination department, and a small volunteer department, I also understand the issue of budgets. Many fire departments lack funds to maintain basic necessities like turnout gear and SCBA, let alone to invest in Class A foam systems. Other questions must be answered as well. If a foam system is purchased, will it be adequately maintained? Will firefighters be permitted to use foam during routine training sessions to ensure proficiency in proportioning and application techniques, or will this prove too costly? Have your firefighters been properly trained to extinguish fires using water plain first so that when the foam system fails, fire suppression efforts can continue uncompromised? While there is no doubt that the use of Class A foam will continue to expand, there exists to date insufficient scientific data and actual field experience to provide a true cost-benefit picture of the effectiveness of these agents in interior structure fire attack.

LITTLE DROPS AGAIN

As a result of two Swedish firefighters being killed in a flashover in the early 1980s, fog nozzle techniques were devised to counter the effects of fire gas ignition and prevent injuries from flashover and backdraft. Termed "offensive" or "three-dimensional" water fog application, these techniques have been explained in great detail in the writings of Paul Grimwood, a retired 26-year veteran firefighter from the London Fire Brigade. Grimwood was kind enough to address my questions and concerns about "3-D" fog techniques. Although I agree with his assessment of the modern fire environment and its attendant hazards—particularly the volatile nature of fire gases and the increasing

hazards of flashover and backdraft-I disagree with several of the specific tactics he advocates.

The brief examination of 3-D water for techniques contained here is taken from a pamphlet entitled "Flashover & Nozzle Techniques" prepared by Grimwood. Offensive fog application requires that small (around 400 micron) droplets produced by special fog nozzles be directed into the overhead gas layers in short bursts or "pulses." The objective is to suspend the droplets in the gases to cool them and retard their ignition (in other words, putting water on smoke as a preventive measure). While ideally 3-D fog application will prevent ignition of the fire gases, Grimwood states that the technique is suitable for both pre- and post-flashover fires. As the water fog turns to steam and expands in volume, it is accompanied by a corresponding decrease or contraction in volume of the fire gases, reportedly avoiding the debilitating effects associated with steam production caused by fog streams during interior firefighting efforts. In addition, by avoiding contact between the water and the heated walls and ceiling (opposite of what the combination method of attack requires), unwanted steam production is further reduced, thereby maintaining tenable conditions for the nozzle team.

Offensive fog techniques require rather precise execution for success. Grimwood states that firefighters employing 3-D fog techniques should be "extremely well practiced in nozzle handling and 'pulsing' actions". Given the wide spectrum of distractions faced by the modern fire service (EMS, haz-mat, technical rescue, and so on) and the youthful look of many fire departments, handline and nozzle techniques must be kept as simple and straightforward as possible. Regardless of its reported effectiveness, offensive fog application does not fit this description. I believe a more traditional approach is in order.

INTERIOR DIRECT ATTACK

Fifty years after Layman's "Little Drops of Water", it's time to admit that fog streams are not the answer. I strongly advocate a return to the time-tested direct method of attack. Its simplicity and effectiveness, coupled with the level of safety it affords the nozzle team, is a good fit with the unpredictable fire grounds of the new millennium. While solid streams are preferable, straight streams may be substituted, provided that fire flows are not compromised. The following tactics and techniques will ensure success when employing an interior direct attack: Due to the volatility of today's fires, a minimum fire flow of 150 gpm is recommended for residential fires. This flow is easily achieved using 1 3/4-inch hose, provided friction losses are accurately determined and correct pump discharge pressures are used.

One firefighter told me that when his department flow tested its 1 3/4-inch preconnected handlines using its standard pump discharge pressures, the average flow was only 84 gallons per minute (gpm). While in theory 84 gpm, properly applied, will extinguish a significant amount of fire, a flow this low allows no room for error and does not provide any reserve to handle unforeseen contingencies. Commercial building fires demand a minimum fire flow of 250 gpm, and this is best delivered through 2 1/2-inch hose using solid bore nozzles. Other parameters that deserve consideration include the minimum effective reach of stream (50 feet for streams used in residential firefighting) and the

nozzle reaction burden. Nozzle reaction forces should be no greater than 60 to 70 pounds. Field tests have indicated that a reaction force exceeding 70 pounds is very difficult for a single firefighter to handle. Realizing that a backup firefighter is most often a luxury and that even when present he will often be positioned well behind the nozzleman to pull hose around corners and feed it forward to the nozzleman as he advances, the reaction burden that can be safely handled by a single firefighter becomes a very important safety issue. Since nozzle reaction is a factor of the weight (volume) of water being discharged and the nozzle pressure, nozzle reaction can be made more manageable by reducing flow volume (an unwise decision) or decreasing nozzle pressure. The only effective means of reducing nozzle pressure without adversely impacting firefighting effectiveness is to employ solid stream tips or low-pressure fog nozzles.

Unlike each of the fog firefighting methods that involves the application of water into the heated overhead to cool the gases, direct attack goes to the root cause of the problem—the source of gas production. David Fornell, in *Fire Stream Management Handbook*, uses the analogy of a propane cylinder leaking a jet of burning gas. The heated solid furnishings and finishings within a burning room are likened to the leaking cylinder; flammable carbon monoxide is substituted for the propane gas. In controlling a leaking and burning LPG cylinder, the goal is to control the fuel supply—the cause of the problem, as opposed to first extinguishing the burning gas—merely a symptom. The goal of the interior direct attack is to apply water *directly* on the heated solid materials within the fire area, reducing their temperature and halting the production of flammable carbon monoxide gas. “In any space containing heated gases which are likely to flash over or in any area already flashed over, cooling the heated solid material providing the fire’s fuel must take place to successfully stop the fire. Getting water onto the heated materials, however, is often easier said than done.

In addition to using the reach afforded by solid and straight streams, the ceiling and upper walls may be used to redirect the stream when heat conditions or obstructions (partitions, piles of stock, partially closed doors) make application immediately to the base of the fire impossible. Sweeping the ceiling with the stream in a side-to-side or clockwise motion also helps eliminate the threat posed by the heated gases without excessive unwanted steam production and violent disruption of the thermal balance characteristic of the indirect and combination methods. Unlike 3-D fog application, which involves cooling the gases with very small water droplets, sweeping the ceiling with a straight or solid stream causes an action that the late Floyd Nelson termed “rattling the fire’s chain.” “Inside the area of the flame, the chemical reactions that take place are often referred to as chain reactions. These chain reactions depend on a smooth flow of oxygen and a smooth flow of fuel vapors to continue their act of combustion”. Nelson calls it the “straight stream off ceiling” attack, and he states that it is highly effective in disrupting the flow of oxygen and fuel, thereby reducing the threats of rollover and flashover.

In addition to agitating the gas layers, using the ceiling to break up the stream creates coarse droplets that will rain down on the burning solid materials and start the cooling

process. Unlike the fine droplets that compose spray streams, the droplets created by splattering stream on the ceiling will be larger and heavier and less likely to vaporize prematurely or be swept away by convection currents. There is another reason for initially directing the stream at an upward angle anytime a fire has progressed to the point where flames are traveling across the ceiling. If a solid or straight stream were to be directed immediately into the lower portion of a well-involved room, the expansion of the water to steam could cause a violent displacement of burning fire gases, which might result in burn injuries to the nozzle team. The stream itself might cause burning debris to scatter, and unwanted steam creation would be increased. (This should not be confused with the action of sweeping the floor with the stream periodically during the advance to push aside glass and debris and cool heated objects and scalding water runoff.)

Lastly, the importance of patience on the part of the nozzle team must be stressed, before entering the fire occupancy with a charged handline, pause momentarily, and observe the smoke venting through the door opening. Try to get a read on the its pressure and temperature, and pay attention to its color. Veteran firefighters know the importance of "lying low and letting it blow." By waiting briefly at the door, the severity of fire conditions can be gauged, and burn injuries caused by the sudden ignition of fire gases can be prevented. Sometimes, by looking back and studying the proven tactics and techniques employed by firefighters of generations past, we can best learn methods for staying alive at the fires we confront today.

They don't work. They reseal the Lexan®. Concrete- and steel-saw blades don't work, because the heated cut reseals itself also. What does work is the carbide teeth of the wood-cutting blades. This is another situation that should be preplanned, and it should be made known that the "automatic assists" to the refight—alternate entry, horizontal ventilation, and more—will be delayed. Also, expect unnatural fire behavior—such as downward spread of fire and flashover, not to mention delayed smoke explosions in remote areas of the occupancy.

Oh man, look at all these locks! Or just one great sophisticated lock—magnetic and the like. Should we go another way? Sure, if there is time! But what if there is no time? Fake-out? Nope.

Remember, very strong doors may be hung on weak walls. Partition walls of block buildings are about one-half the thickness of the enclosure walls! It can be easily breached—at least in the area of the locking device that can be manipulated by a gloved firefighter's hand reaching through a tiny hole!

Fake-out in the fire service must be like "surprise." It should be spoken of until it no longer exists. ■

THE "NEW" COMPANY OFFICER— SO NOW WHAT?

NOVEMBER 1997

HE ARE SOME THOUGHTS that will directly affect those of you in large departments who are being "threatened" with a promotion to first-line supervisor and who must take another assignment in another area of the city, as well as those of you who are in smaller and volunteer departments, where everyone knows everyone.

One advantage of the larger departments is that the new officer is usually sent on a "career path," another buzzword meaning "until we get a look at 'em," and the length of time in this "covering every shift" position is indirectly related to the amount of "hooks" you know on the job. If you're assigned to a new station each shift in your department, here is where you can learn all your lessons, and they won't greatly affect your career or reputation. Do the things you have been sleeplessly thinking about for the past months. Try them out. Keep notes for refining the procedure or a case for scrapping it.

Never use the cop-out, "What do I know? I am only covering!" It means, "I am only here for the tour." Make the decision, and prepared to discuss/defend/change it as any impact stimulus—such as a loud-talking chief—affects it.

As you arrive at your new assignment for the day (the one where no one ever heard of you), get there early and go immediately to the office. Get out the roster, and make a list of those members who are "supposed" to show up for this tour. Check sick leaves, injuries, special excused absences, where the replacements are, and who they are.

Next, make your riding list for your pocket, and add a few things—the first name of each individual, for instance. It works wonders *after* the lieutenant-firefighter relationship has been established. Next, spend the time to look up and note the time each assigned firefighter has on the fire department. You may be surprised (as a wise old deputy chief told me on the first day of my "lieutenanting"). In the larger departments, members will *always* assume you have just come from an assignment that is much, much slower than theirs. They could be doing two runs a day, and they will assume that you came from a place that had only one or fewer! The "veteran" of two years (see where that list comes in?) will be the first to test you. He has not yet learned that lieutenants are not newborns—that he hasn't yet the time in rank to think of filing for the job you now have been appointed to.

The good thing about the real events in the past few paragraphs is that if you know they are coming at you (you prepared for it and expect it—remember?), they will not destroy your day. You won't hate the house. You won't kick the bed, but you will get a chuckle out of it because I told you it was coming.

Always hold a roll call. It is the most important ceremony and dialogue of the shift. Get the members up from wherever they assemble at the instant the shift starts. Go somewhere on the apparatus floor, preferably alongside the rig. Reject all excuses. They are historic. "We do it right here in the kitchen on this shift, Lieu." "Aw, you don't want one of those, do you?" "I got other things I gotta get started with. Just tell me what I got today." Bunk. Get the team together. Create the huddle before the game. Make sure everyone is in. Discuss the apparatus readiness, ask questions about differences in operations and tool assignments, response areas, discuss information from upstairs, events of the day as scheduled, meals, and anything else. The most important thing is to get the team on their feet and at another location.

Don't fall into the trap of, "Gee, I don't know enough for this job! How can I tell others what to do? I am not sure myself." Bull! You know enough. You passed the test. You had the interest. You will grow every day. Leaders are not born. They're made by their own hands. Start carving.

Do not encourage the use of your first name while working. It is the biggest single factor that holds leadership and command efficiency away from a candidate—so much so that you may never recover or, if you do, it will be a painful experience. One other and more important side effect of that problem is that

it encourages discussions of orders rather than compliance with them. It is okay if the discussion concerns whether to sweep the steps up or sweep the steps down. The hard part comes when your decision to make the floor above the fire or to evacuate the building is up for discussion. I watched this disastrous behavior destroy a methodical and orderly confined-space rescue operation, because everything the rescue captain ordered was up for grabs. "OK, Charlie, but we usually put the cables here." "I don't want to do it this way, John. Let's try this."

Remember, *you* are in charge, and *you* are responsible. Stop complaining. In the paid sector, you used to be paid for maintenance work. Now, you fill out paperwork and think.

Another tip on paperwork: Reports do not have to be made immediately! For radio transmissions—get the facts rapidly, and form a plan for what you want to say, especially in the case of apparatus accidents or special operations that require radio transmission on tape. For written records, no one takes enough time, and no one has a report edited by another. "Why, it was perfect the first time I wrote it." Right? Wrong! Take some notes you can throw away later. Make sure that you want to report and that it should still be reported when you ready yourself. Many situations in the fire service have a way of correcting themselves or becoming less important as time goes on. Oh, and if you have a company journal type of record, after the event in question, give the house watch a scrap of paper to keep track of the events, and you take the journal away until you are ready to make your entry of the event in its chronological order; then have the house watch enter the routine stuff *after* you have finished. This may take a long time. ■

THE "NEW" COMPANY OFFICER— SO NOW WHAT? PART 2

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LAST MONTH, I LEFT YOU, THE NEW COMPANY OFFICER assigned to the "house" for one day or right after having been elected and everyone is looking at you, with a few tips.

Still in the house for the first time. You had your roll call. Now look at the apparatus to which you have been assigned. It can tell you a lot. A great groundbreaker is to ask one of the members

to show you the "rig." But your survey tells you stuff you don't want them to know. How clean is the apparatus—and how clean will it be in one hour? You know what kind of tour the group you relieved had; you looked at the run record while writing up your riding list—or passport, or whatever. What do the tools look like? Are they stored in pairs and in convenient but secure places on the apparatus? Is the tar on the hook heads or ax blades fresh? ■

Tom Brennan

there as a “badge” of honor (disgrace) from the last job from a few weeks ago. How about the burrs on the back of the flathead ax or the rust on the hook and halligan? I just gave you the worst-case scenario. If the apparatus and tools are in great shape, settle in for a great tour of duty.

Remember, you are in charge—and worse, you are responsible! Take the time to speak with the chauffeur (driver). Get a feeling of what he does and doesn’t know. In the paid sector, he is new to you. In the volunteer sector, his reputation is known to all. I remember getting in the officer side of the truck on a particularly icy and snow-pelted day. It was in the volunteer sector, so the driver was the first firefighter in the door (policy, policy). He was staring at the windshield and at the snow and ice. Without turning his head, he said, “Hey, Lieu, lots of lights and sound for this one. It’s hell out there.” Now, what? Firefighters are arriving and jumping onboard. I asked the “driver” if he knew that I was a lieutenant and then ordered him to shut down and get out of the truck. We needed a chauffeur, not a maniac.

Now, you are on the response. You are responsible only for the “three Rs.” Make sure that is all you discuss with the driver. Ensure that the *route* is known. *Relay* all information received over the radio en route. And *regulate* the speed so that it is the safest commensurate with traffic patterns, controls, and the type of response. You don’t have to have both of your new officer’s feet on the dashboard if you’re responding to a dumpster fire.

Positioning apparatus. Remember, you are ultimately responsible for positioning the apparatus where it can be most efficient on the fireground. Begin sizing up before you arrive. This is extremely crucial if you are in command of the first- or second-arriving truck company. First engines need to know that the most convenient hydrant may be the most disruptive on the fire scene—in front of the fire building or before the fire building—and that all the other apparatus are following you down the narrow street. Ensure that your aerial can be used. Ensure that you have a plan for a constant water supply before you leave the presence of the pump operator. And while we are on the subject of arrival at the fire problem, never play catch-up! Never! Learn

how to quickly count how many lines you will need and how many areas will need checking and searching, and more. Then ask for the additional apparatus. Be conservative if you are the first to arrive. Don’t put the “pot” on your head before you get water on the fire. If the fire goes out before all the apparatus you asked for arrive, not many will ever forget it—especially you. But always err on the side of too many apparatus.

Operations also needs “new lieutenant discipline.” You know how to perform the tactics. You’re good at it and like it. It is a copout for you to “get dirty” again. But you are in charge. You are responsible for the task as well as for the efficiency and safety with which it is performed. Keep your hands out of the operation. The company officer is the most important individual who can decide if the firefighter operating with funnel vision will get injured. The minute you become laboriously involved in performing a part of the tactic, you become useless as a supervisor.

And, your “big picture” becomes out of focus, distorted, and useless. I know many of you are saying that staffing is devastated and there is no one else. That problem needs to be solved also—one step at a time.

No matter what, hold your critique on the fireground as soon as your team is assembled. Get all the members together and ask what happened. Ask what each person saw, believed, found out, performed, felt, and can improve. Begin the policy with the first fire. It gets harder and harder if you pass up on the first few. Don’t be a wiseguy, but show that you are interested in the operation and that they can expect to participate in this “ceremony” all the time.

Always try to show interest in the unit and personnel and performance to which you are assigned. If you display an attitude that conveys, “I’m only here for the shift (or week or month),” your problems will multiply by the hour. The paperwork belongs to you; keep it mentally, physically, and ethically in the office where it belongs, and communicate your focus on operations to the personnel assigned.

Next time, drills and other nonpostoperational critiques. ■

