

Union County Standard Operating Guidelines  
**Fireground Operations**

**Fireground Operations, SOG 3.16**

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**STRUCTURE FIRES**

1. Upon Arrival
  - a. The first in Officer shall give a brief condition report:
    - i. Number of stories.
    - ii. Type of structure.
    - iii. What is showing?
    - iv. From what side the problem is showing or where?
    - v. Report on exposures.
    - vi. Who is in command?
    - vii. Plan of Tactical action.
  - b. Conduct an on spot size-up.
    - i. What have I got?
    - ii. What is burning?
    - iii. Where is it going?
    - iv. What and who is in its way?
    - v. Do I need additional help?
2. Communications and Coordination
  - a. Good communication and proper coordination are essential at structure fires.
    - i. The IC must provide the necessary coordination of the various fire ground activities.
    - ii. The IC must communicate all instructions and vital information clearly to those who he is supervising.
3. Tactical Considerations
  - a. The Tactical objectives in fighting a structure fire shall be in order of priority as follows:
    - i. Rescue
      1. Human life is the most important consideration at a fire or other emergency.
      2. Rescue of humans override all other strategic considerations at a fire.
      3. A primary and secondary search shall be conducted at all structure fires.
    - ii. Exposure protection
      1. Exposure protection is the strategy of preventing a fire from spreading to the uninvolved building(s) (or uninvolved parts of the fire building.)
    - iii. Confinement
      1. The strategy of confinement means preventing the fire from extending to uninvolved sections of the building.
      2. Whenever possible, the most effective method of confining a fire spread is a direct attack on the fire.

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3. The IC shall decide whether to make an offensive approach (aggressive interior attack), or a defensive approach (attacking the fire from the outside). There may be situations when both approaches could be used.
  4. All avenues of fire spread must be considered (i.e. shafts, openings, utility raceways, ducts, etc.).
  5. Where fires involve concealed spaces (attic, ceilings, construction voids, etc.) it becomes very important to open up and operate fire streams into such areas.
- iv. Extinguishment
1. In most fire situations a quick and aggressive attack on the seat of the fire will take care of rescue, exposures, and confinement at the same time.
  2. The size-up will provide information as to techniques, equipment, and manpower needs to overcome the fire.
- v. Overhaul
1. The purpose of overhaul is to make sure the fire is completely out.
  2. Overhaul operations must be properly coordinated with fire investigation efforts.
  3. Unsafe conditions should be identified early in the overhaul process and definite efforts made to avoid the possible problems associated with the same.
  4. During overhaul most Firefighters are more relaxed, tired, perhaps less alert and thus more apt to get injured.
  5. Personnel should not remove their SCBA until the area is deemed safe of toxic gases. There may be more toxic gases present during overhaul than during the initial attack. As the structure cools hazardous gases collect.
  6. When available, a fresh crew should perform overhaul. If personnel remove their SCBA after the area is deemed safe, dust masks should be worn to protect from airborne particles (i.e. insulation dust).
  7. During overhaul care should be given to protect personnel from exposure to carbon monoxide and other by products of combustion. The Carbon Monoxide Detector should be placed in the work area to monitor the CO level until it drops below 35 ppm and is deemed safe for SCBA removal.
- vi. Ventilation
1. Based upon the situation, ventilation may need to occur anytime during the operation.
  2. Ventilation shall be employed to:
    - a. Channel heat, smoke and flames from potential victims.
    - b. To prevent backdraft and flashover.

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- c. To remove heat and smoke from the building, to reduce property damage.
        - d. To allow the interior of the structure to be more tenable and safer for firefighting operations.
      3. To prevent further extension of fire into uninvolved areas (i.e. trench cut).
    - vii. Salvage
      1. Salvage may need to begin at various points during a fire operation.
      2. Salvage includes those operations required to safe guard personal property, furnishings, and the unaffected portions of a structure from the effects of heat, smoke, fire, and the weather.
      3. Salvage shall include:
        - a. The use of salvage covers.
        - b. Removing water from the structure.
        - c. Removing furniture and personal belongings to a safe location.
        - d. Debris removal.
        - e. Covering openings to keep weather out and to secure the building (if materials available to do so).
        - f. All members are expected to perform in a manner that continually reduces loss during fire operations.
  - b. Utility Control
    - i. Utilities should be shut down and brought under control to insure that they will not contribute to the fires spread, overall damage or create any type of safety hazard.
    - ii. At structure fires where electrical involvement or damage has occurred, request via radio the response of the proper electrical company. Also notify the proper gas company to shut down gas or propane to the building.
    - iii. If the electric company is not available in time, fire personnel may shutdown the main breaker and notify Command of such action (**Do Not Pull Meter**). This may not eliminate the hazard if the services have been modified. If necessary, shut down gas lines at the meter or propane at the tank.
    - iv. If necessary, contact the water department through dispatch to shut down water at the valve closest to the point of usage.
  - c. Safety
    - i. Safety is an important aspect of all fire ground operations. Accomplishing fire ground objectives in a safe manner helps reduce firefighter injuries and deaths.
    - ii. Personnel operating at structure fires shall wear appropriate protective clothing and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus.
    - iii. Fireground operations should not be carried out in a rush, but rather they should be accomplished at a reasonable pace, which

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allows for operations to be completed in a safe and efficient manner. Never run on the Fireground except to escape a hazard.

- iv. Fire Officers must constantly be aware of both fire and structural conditions, which may deteriorate, placing firefighters in jeopardy.
  - v. Indications of the possibility of structural collapse and/or other life threatening occurrences shall be communicated immediately to all personnel within the incident perimeter and appropriate actions taken.
- d. Life Safety to Occupants
- i. Is the number one priority.
  - ii. Fireground operations shall be coordinated and conducted in such a manner as to support life safety operations that may be currently underway.
  - iii. Hose line placement and ventilation shall be coordinated so as affect safe and efficient rescue operations.
  - iv. Use normal means of egress first (i.e. halls, stairs, etc.).
  - v. Aerial ladders, hand ladders, and fire escapes are considered to be secondary means of egress.
  - vi. Provide for the care and medical needs of victims who have been removed from the fire building.
- e. On Site Fire Equipment and Systems
- i. Utilize on-site fire protection equipment and systems to best advantage in accordance with the type of system and the fire situation.