

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:

Number of stories.

Type of structure.

What is showing?

From what side the problem is showing or where?

Report on exposures.

Who is in command?

Plan of Tactical action.

- b. Conduct an on spot size-up.

What have I got?

Where is it going?

What needs to be done to affect a positive outcome?

2. Communications and Coordination

Good communication and proper coordination are essential at structure fires.

The IC must provide the necessary coordination of various fire ground activities.

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:

**Rescue**

Human life is the most important consideration at a fire or other emergency.

Rescue of humans override all other strategic considerations at a fire.

A primary and secondary search shall be conducted at all structure fires.

**Exposure protection**

Exposure protection is the strategy of preventing a fire from spreading to the uninvolved building(s) (or uninvolved parts of the fire building.)

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**Confinement**

The strategy of confinement means preventing the fire from extending to uninvolved sections of the building.

Whenever possible, the most effective method of confining a fire spread is a direct attack on the fire.

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, but must be done so with extreme caution.

All avenues of fire spread must be considered (i.e. shafts, openings, utility raceways, ducts, etc.).

Where fires involve concealed spaces (attic, ceilings, construction voids, etc.) it becomes very important to open up and operate fire streams into such areas.

**Extinguishment**

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.

The size-up will provide information as to techniques, equipment, and manpower needs to overcome the fire.

**Overhaul**

The purpose of overhaul is to make sure the fire is completely out.

Overhaul operations must be properly coordinated with fire investigation efforts.

Unsafe conditions should be identified and dealt with early in the overhaul process.

During overhaul most Firefighters are more relaxed, tired, perhaps less alert, and thus more apt to get injured.

Personnel should not remove their SCBA until the area is deemed safe to do so. There may be more toxic gases present during overhaul than during the initial attack.

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When available, a fresh crew should perform overhaul. Personnel should only remove their SCBA after the area is appropriately monitored **and** deemed safe by the Operations Section Chief or the Incident Commander.

**Ventilation**

Based upon the situation, ventilation may need to occur anytime during the operation.

Ventilation shall be employed to:

Channel heat, smoke and flames from potential victims.

To prevent backdraft and flashover.

To remove heat and smoke from the building, to reduce property damage.

To allow the interior of the structure to be more tenable and safer for firefighting operations.

To prevent further extension of fire into uninvolved areas (i.e. trench cut).

**Salvage**

Salvage may need to begin at any time during a fire operation.

Salvage includes those operations required to safeguard personal property, furnishings, and the unaffected portions of a structure from the effects of heat, smoke, fire, and the weather.

Salvage may include:

The use of salvage covers.

Removing water from the structure.

Removing furniture and personal belongings to a safe location.

Debris removal.

Covering openings to keep weather out and to secure the building.

All members are expected to perform in a manner that reduces loss during fire operations.

- b. Utility Control: Utilities should be shut down and brought under control to insure that they will not contribute to the fire spread, overall damage or create any type of safety hazard.
- c. 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.

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- d. 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.
- e. If necessary, contact the water department through dispatch to shut down water at the valve closest to the point of usage.

4. **Safety**

- a. Safety is an important aspect of all fire ground operations. Accomplishing fire ground objectives in a safe manner helps reduce firefighter injuries and deaths.
- b. Personnel operating at structure fires shall wear appropriate protective clothing and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus.
- c. Fireground operations should not be carried out in a rush, but rather they should be accomplished at a reasonable pace, which allows for operations to be completed in a safe and efficient manner. Never run on the Fireground, except to escape a hazard.
- d. Fire Officers must constantly be aware of both fire and structural conditions, which may deteriorate, placing firefighters in jeopardy.
- e. 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.
- f. Life Safety to Occupants is the number one priority.
- g. Fireground operations shall be coordinated and conducted in such a manner as to support life safety operations that may be currently underway.
- h. Hose line placement and ventilation shall be coordinated so as affect safe and efficient rescue operations.
- i. Use normal means of egress first (i.e. halls, stairs, etc.).
- j. Aerial ladders, hand ladders, and fire escapes are considered to be secondary means of egress.
- k. Provide for the care and medical needs of victims who have been removed from the fire building.
- l. Utilize on-site fire protection equipment and systems to best advantage in accordance with the type of system and the fire situation.