

	ROFR Section: 1900		TFCA Best Practices:	
	Effective: 9/2013	Revision:	Fire Chief: 	

Search

It is standard operating procedure to extend a primary search in all involved and exposed occupancies which can be entered. Command must structure initial operations around the completion of the primary search. Primary search means companies have quickly gone through all affected areas and verified the removal and/or safety of all occupants.

Time is the critical factor in the primary search process. Successful primary search operations must necessarily be extended quickly and during initial fire stages.

The rescue functions that follow lengthy fire control activities will be regarded tactically as presenting a secondary search. Secondary search means that companies thoroughly search the interior of the fire area after initial fire control and ventilation activities have been completed. Different companies should preferably complete secondary search than those involved in primary search activities. Thoroughness, rather than time, is the critical factor in secondary search.

The completion of the primary search is reported utilizing the standard radio reporting term "ALL CLEAR". It is the responsibility of Command to coordinate primary search assignments, secure completion reports from interior companies and to transmit the "ALL CLEAR" report to dispatch. Dispatch will record the time of this report from Command.

The stage of the fire becomes a critical factor that affects the rescue approach developed by Command. The following items outline the basic Command approach to fire stages:

- In nothing showing situations, or in very minor fire cases that clearly pose no life hazard, Command must structure a rapid interior search and report "ALL CLEAR". (The interior search for victims will also verify no fire.)
- In smoke showing and working fire situations, fire control efforts must be extended simultaneously with rescue operations in order to gain entry and control interior access to complete primary search. In such cases, Command and operating companies must be aware the operation is in a rescue mode until primary search is complete, regardless of the fire control required. In working fire situations, primary search must be followed by a secondary search.
- In cases of fully involved buildings or sections of buildings, immediate entry and primary search activities become impossible and survival of occupants is improbable. Command must initially report fully involved conditions and that he will *not* report an all clear. As quickly as fire control is achieved, Command must structure what is, in effect, a secondary search for victims.

Command and operating companies cannot depend upon reports from spectators to determine status of victims. Control forces should utilize reports as to the location, number, and condition of victims as supporting primary search efforts and must extend and complete a primary search wherever entry is possible.

Command must consider the following factors in developing a basic rescue size-up:

1. Number, location and condition of victims
2. Affect the fire has on the victims
3. Capability of the control forces to enter the building, remove/protect victims and control fire.
- 4.

Command must make the basic rescue decision:

Do we remove victims from fire? OR Do we remove the fire from the victims?

In some cases, occupants are safer in their rooms than moving through contaminated hallways and interior areas. Such movement may also impede interior firefighting.

Command must realistically evaluate the manpower required to actually remove victims and then treat their fire-affected bodies. In cases involving such multiple victims, Command must call for the timely response of adequate resource and quickly develop an organization that will both stabilize the fire and provide for the removal and treatment of the occupants.

Rescue efforts should be extended in the following order:

1. Most severely threatened
2. The largest number (groups)
3. The remainder of the fire area
4. The exposed areas

Command must make specific primary search assignments to companies to cover specific areas of large, complex occupancies and maintain on-going control of such companies until the entire area is searched. When primary search companies encounter and remove victims, Command must assign other companies to continue to cover the interior positions vacated by those companies.

All initial attack efforts must be directed toward supporting rescue efforts and hose lines must be placed in a manner to control interior access, confine the fire, and protect avenues of escape.

Hoseline placement becomes a critical factor in these cases and Command and all operating companies must realize that the operation is in a rescue mode. It may be necessary to operate in a manner that writes off the structure in order to buy rescue time.

Normal means of interior access (stairs, halls, interior public areas, etc.) should be utilized to remove victims whenever possible. Command must structure treatment of victims after removal. Multiple victims should be removed to one location for more effective triage and treatment. Command should coordinate and utilize paramedic capability wherever available and assign treatment companies as required to an exterior Medical Sector.

Once the primary search has been completed and an "ALL CLEAR" transmitted, Command must maintain control of access to the fire area; beware of occupants (and others) re-entering the building.

The most urgent reason for calling additional resources is for the purpose of covering life safety. Command must develop a realistic (and pessimistic) rescue size-up as early as possible.

The term "SEARCH & RESCUE" should be used when structuring a primary search over the radio; "ALL CLEAR" should be used only as a completion report.

