

SHELBYVILLE FIRE & RESCUE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

	SECTION: Operations	S.O.P: 109.04
	SUBJECT: Fireground Strategy	PAGE: 1 of 4
	Approved By:	Effective Date: December 1, 2012
		Revision Date:

Purpose:

The following procedure outlines the fireground strategy to be employed at structure fires. Fireground operations will fall in one of two strategies, Offensive or Defensive. The two strategies are based on a standard Risk Management Plan that is to be employed at ALL structure fires. This is the basis for this procedure.

Procedure:

I. Within a Structured Risk Management Plan

WE MAY RISK OUR LIVES A LOT TO PROTECT SAVABLE LIVES.

WE MAY RISK OUR LIVES A LITTLE TO PROTECT SAVABLE PROPERTY.

WE WILL NOT RISK OUR LIVES AT ALL TO SAVE WHAT IS ALREADY LOST.

1. Considering the level of risk, the Incident Commander will choose the proper strategy to be used at the fire scene. Ensure that all personnel are operating within the strategy. The strategy can change with conditions or because certain bench marks (i.e. ALL CLEAR) are obtained. The strategic mode will be based on:
 - b. The building (type of construction, condition, age, etc.)
 - c. Structural integrity of the building (contents vs. structural involvement)
 - d. The fire load (what type of fuel is burning and what's left to burn)
 - e. The fire and/or smoke conditions (extent, location, etc.)
 - f. The rescue profile (savable occupants / survivability profile)
2. Avoiding simultaneous OFFENSIVE and DEFENSIVE strategies in the same fire area. This typically happens by first committing personnel to interior positions, then operating master streams from exterior positions. This places interior crews in danger of injury or death.
3. Managing fireground strategy must start upon arrival of the first unit and be constantly monitored and evaluated throughout the incident. The initial Incident Commander *will include the fireground strategy in the on-scene report*. If Command is transferred to another officer, the officer assuming Command must evaluate the fireground strategy based on the Risk Management Plan.
4. Fireground strategy provides a starting point to begin fireground operations. Once the strategy is announced, all firefighters know whether to operate on the interior or exterior of the building. The fireground strategy cannot be a mystery to anyone, everyone operating on the fireground must be operating in the same strategy mode: Offensive or Defensive.

II. Offensive Strategy

1. Within the framework of the Risk Management Plan, the structure must first be determined to be safe to enter. Once determined safe, on Offensive Fire Attack is centered on RESCUE. When safe to do so, the SFD will initiate offensive operations at the scene of structure fires. The following are guidelines for Offensive fire attacks.
 - 1 Assign RIC team prior to entry.
 - 2 Initial attack efforts must be directed toward supporting a primary search – the first attack line must go between the victims and the fire to protect avenues of rescue and escape.

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- 3 Determine fire conditions and extent before starting fire operations (as far as possible).
- 4 Offensive fires should be fought from the Interior (interior capability is the principal offensive strategy factor).
- 5 Avoid exterior application of water during offensive operation. This is usually the very worst application point.
- 6 Avoid fire attack from the burning side of the building. An attack from the burning side generally will drive the fire, smoke, and heat back into the building and drive the interior fire control forces out of the building.
- 7 Companies must resist the urge to focus only on the fire and evaluate what is not burning rather than what is actually on fire. The unburned portion represents where the fire is going and should establish the framework for fire control activities and requirements.
- 8 Command must consider the most critical direction and avenues of fire extension, plus its speed, particularly as they affect:
 - a. Rescue activities
 - b. Level of risk to firefighters
 - c. Confinement efforts
 - d. Exposure protection
- 9 Command must allocate personnel and resources based upon this fire-spread evaluation.
- 10 Command must establish an attack plan that overpowers the fire with actual water application, either from offensive or defensive positions.
- 11 Command must consider the seven sides (or sectors) of the fire: front, rear, sides, top, bottom and interior. Fires cannot be considered under control until all seven sides are addressed. Failure to do so frequently results in fire extension.
- 12 Where the fire involves concealed spaces (attics, ceiling areas, construction voids, etc.) it becomes paramount that companies open up and operate fire streams into such areas.
- 13 Early ventilation (natural or positive pressure) is a major support item that must be addressed during concealed space attacks. This must be initiated early and be well coordinated. Ventilation openings should be made in the fire area. Positive pressure should be injected from the unburned side and exit out of the fire area.
- 14 **WRITE-OFF PROPERTY THAT IS ALREADY LOST** and go on to protect exposed property based on the most dangerous direction of fire spread. Do not continue to operate in positions that are essentially lost.
- 15 The basic variables relating to attack operations involve:
 - Location/position of attack
 - Size of attack
 - Support functions
- 16 Command develops an effective attack through the management of these factors. Command must balance and integrate attack size and position with fire conditions, risks and resources.

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- 17 Command can quickly determine the appropriate strategy. In other cases, the situation is MARGINAL and Command must initiate an offensive interior attack, while setting up defensive positions on the exterior.
- 18 THE ONLY REASON TO OPERATE IN MARGINAL SITUATIONS IS A RESCUE.
- 19 The effect of the interior attack must be constantly evaluated, and the attack abandoned if necessary. Command must match the strategy with conditions. The Incident Commander controls overall incident scene safety by determining the proper strategy to be used.
- 20 The Incident Commander should change strategies from offensive to defensive before the building starts disassembling itself due to the structural damage. THE INCIDENT COMMANDER DETERMINES THE STRATEGY, THE BUILDING SHOULDN'T.
- 21 Command should abandon marginal attacks when;
 - A primary all clear is obtained and the situation is still marginal.
 - The roof is unsafe or untenable. Especially working fires in large unsupported or lightweight trussed attic spaces.
 - Interior forces encounter heavy heat and cannot locate the fire or cannot make any progress on the fire.
 - Heavy smoke is being forced from the building under pressure and is increasing.
- 22 Command needs to constantly evaluate conditions while operating in marginal situations. This requires frequent and detailed reports from Sector Officers.
- 23 It is imperative that Command assigns a Roof Sector as early as possible during marginal situations for rapid evaluation of roof conditions. In certain situations, Command should strongly consider not committing crews to the interior of a structure unless he/she receives a report from Roof Sector that the roof of the structure is safe to operate on and under.

III. Defensive Strategy

1. The decision to operate in a defensive strategy indicates that the offensive attack strategy, or the potential for one, has been abandoned for reasons of personnel safety, and the involved structure has been conceded as lost (the Incident Commander made a conscious decision to write the structure off).
2. The announcement of change to a defensive strategy will be made, as Emergency Traffic and all personnel will withdraw from the structure AND MAINTAIN A SAFE DISTANCE FROM THE BUILDING. Officers will account for their crews and advise Command on the status of their crew. A PAR (Personnel Accountability Report) shall be obtained after any switch from offensive to defensive strategy.
3. Interior lines will be withdrawn and repositioned when changing to a defensive strategy. Crews should retreat with their hose lines if safe to do so. If retreat is being delayed because of hose lines, and it's unsafe to stay in the building, hose lines should be abandoned.
4. All exposures, both immediate and anticipated, must be identified and protected. The first priority in defensive operations is personnel safety; the second is exposure protection.
5. The next priority may be to knock down the main body of fire. This may assist in protection of exposures but doesn't replace it as a higher priority.

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6. Master streams are generally the most effective tactic to be employed in defensive operations. For tactical purposes, a standard master stream flow of 750 GPM should be the guideline. Adjustments may be made upward or downward from this figure but it is very significant in the initial deployment of master streams.
7. When the exposure is severe and water is limited, the most effective tactic is to put water on the exposure and, if needed, from the interior of the exposure.
8. Once exposure protection is established, attention may be directed to knocking down the main body of fire and thermal-column cooling. The same principles of large volume procedures should be employed.
9. Fire under control means the forward progress of the fire has been stopped and the remaining fire can be extinguished with the on-scene resources; it doesn't mean the fire is completely out. When the fire is brought under control, Command will notify Dispatch utilizing the standard radio report of "FIRE UNDER CONTROL". Dispatch will record the time of this report. Command must initiate a PAR report from all on-scene sectors and crews.