

Primary Search Standard Operating Procedure

(Model)

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Any part of the following model Standard Operating Procedure may be used by any department as a guide to prevent the injury or fatality of firefighters or civilians during the course of a primary search.

Searching with two or more crews

During structure fires and in every case occupant survival is possible it will be the policy of this department to ensure firefighter safety by use of decisions which result in the best possible outcome. To that end and whenever survival is possible, first arriving firefighters will conduct a 360 degree walk around of the structure and if relatively safe, initiate a primary search. If staffing allows, the search will be conducted simultaneously with the advancement of an attack line to locate and extinguish the seat of the fire. If it has not already occurred, truck crews and engines crews in this effort will work in a coordinated manner to prevent the fire from transitioning into the flashover stage while any victims located are removed from the structure. Otherwise, firefighters are to quickly obtain and transmit an all clear on the primary search verifying the structure has been searched.

Searching with a truck crew

In cases when the first arriving company at the scene of a working structure fire is a truck crew without water and after a 360 walk around is conducted, they will, to the degree possible, attempt to reach possible trapped victims using the shortest distance from the exterior. Officers must bear in mind however the possibility of deteriorating conditions rapidly developing during this time frame and be prepared to exit prior to exposure. These deteriorating conditions include Flashover or a wind driven fire.

Searching with an engine company

In cases when the first arriving company at the scene of a working structure fire is an engine company and after a 360 walk around is conducted, they will initially locate and attack the seat of the fire and do so continuously until the main body of fire has been significantly knocked down or fully extinguished. Thereafter, attention must be placed on locating and removing occupants from the structure as quickly as possible. However, there may be an exception and sound officer judgment must be exercised during scenarios where a rescue of an occupant remote from the seat of the fire may be safely removed prior to attack of the fire.