

ON SCENE: FIREFIGHTER



Take Action

Firefighters are the working arm of the fire service. Their ability to perform tactical functions can mean the difference between a smooth operation and one filled with mistakes that could endanger others. At the same time, the firefighter cannot just be a “robot” that does whatever they are told. They must be another set of eyes for their company officer and incident commander (IC). As such, understanding more than just task-level firefighting is paramount. Comprehension of strategy and tactics allows the firefighter to recognize the relationship between their duties and the “big picture”. This fact sheet will examine the considerations necessary for those who carry out the task-level work on the fireground.

En Route

- **A factor in firefighter death and injury is not using seat belts.** The second leading cause of firefighter death is vehicle accidents. Who has the responsibility to ensure that you are seat-belted while en route?
- What can you do, in the role of driver, to ensure personnel in your apparatus arrive safely? Is speed a factor? Do you know your area? Road conditions?
- Is radio traffic giving you information that could help you perform your job? Will it tell you which hose line to pull? What tools to grab? What the ‘battlefield’ looks like?
- PPE allows current firefighters abilities and access their predecessors did not have. While true, there are limitations to PPE. Do you understand those limitations? How does not wearing full PPE effect your future and that of your family’s?

The First Five Minutes

Spend the week of June 19-25 focusing on the first five minutes of structural fire response at the chief, incident commander, company officer, and firefighter levels. Make sure all duty shifts are able to participate in the training throughout the week.

IAFC Rules of Engagement for Structural Firefighting

Section 1: Increasing Firefighter Survival provides lesson plans for firefighter survival. Section 3: Rules of Engagement provides resources for firefighters and incident commanders.

NVFC Volunteer Firefighter Health and Safety Priorities

Sets forth a series of B.E.S.T Practices for Behavior, Equipment, Standards and Codes, Training.

Stand Down Resources

All resources are available at www.safetystanddown.org.



On Location

- Can apparatus placement affect the efficiency of operations? Do you understand the issues with water supply at this incident?
- Have you done what is necessary to assure accountability? Does accountability go further than a tag? Is freelancing being accountable to the expectations of the IC, the company officer, or your crew? Have you pulled the expected line and policed kinks, grabbed the expected tools, or thrown the expected ladder?
- What does the construction of the building mean for your tasks? What are the escape points? Are they blocked? What information can you pass along to your supervisors?
- What does the smoke tell you? Where is the fire going? How long do you have to accomplish the tasks necessary to bring the fire under control? What indicators inside should be of concern?
- Do you understand what new research is telling us about flow paths? The effects of wind? Using exterior streams for certain fires before interior attack?

Inside

- What are the negative effects of tunnel vision? Are there positive ones? How will maintaining situational awareness influence your ability to perform your work?
- You are an extension of your company officer and the IC. What conditions should you look for that will endanger your crew, other crews, or simply impede the incident action plan?
- How important is fireground speed and efficiency to your job? Are there times when speed becomes a liability?
- Do you understand how to call for a Mayday or what to do if one is called?
- Do you know what to do if you are told to evacuate or abandon the building?