

R.I.T. WAS NOT REPLACED

SUMMARY

The first engine at a residential fire was making a ground-floor interior attack when Command ordered the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) to take the backup line to the second floor. While RIT was advancing up the stairs, a portion of the house collapsed, cutting off the first-floor firefighters from their egress with no one available to help.

EVENT DESCRIPTION

The first engine crew saw fire at the Bravo/Charlie corner of a two story light-weight wood-frame house and advanced an attack line through the front door. Command assigned the second engine company as a RIT, and the crew pulled a back-up line and positioned it at the front door. Command then ordered the RIT to make an interior attack on the second floor. While climbing the stairs, the RIT felt the building shake and heard a loud crash, and then saw black smoke and fire advancing toward them. They were attacking the fire when the first-floor firefighters called a Mayday. Command then directed all crews to evacuate the building. RIT exited the front door, discovering part of the house's great room had collapsed. The crew asked Command if they should re-enter to help the crew calling the Mayday. That crew, unable to exit the way they entered, was fortunately able to find egress through Side Charlie without needing assistance.

View the Report: [RIT put to work and not replaced during attack](#)

TAKE AWAYS

Command attempted to extinguish the fire quickly with limited resources, but did not maintain a two-in, two-out approach, and had no crew ready to help the firefighters when they called a Mayday. Note that both engine crews could have easily been injured or trapped by the collapse and then neither would have had any immediate help available. Further, the RIT was reassigned before they could assemble a tools cache that a late-arriving crew could quickly use for rescue.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What duties fall under a RIT's responsibilities?
 2. Does your department view the second hoseline as a "backup line" or a "second attack line", or does it depend on the circumstances? What is the difference between the two?
 3. If you get only two fire engines and a ladder truck on your next house fire, will anyone be assigned as a RIT? Who makes that call?
 4. As an engine crew, how would you operate differently if you knew there was no RIT available?
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LEADING PRACTICES

The role of the Rapid Intervention Team (also called RIC, Rapid Intervention Crew, or FAST, Firefighter Assistance and Search Team) is to be prepared and ready to help firefighters in danger. The RIT should take proactive measures: assemble a cache of tools and equipment which can be used in rescue (including a thermal imaging camera), note egress points, perform a 360 degree survey of the structure (noting trouble spots), and track the location and progress of interior crews. Depending on local protocol and resources, a RIT may need to deploy ground ladders, and remove barriers such as iron bars on windows. The RIT should be in full PPE and ready to enter an IDLH as quickly as needed. Given the responsibility of the RIT, Command should not assign it other duties.

RELATED NEAR MISS REPORTS

[RIT leader ignores responsibility and attempts to get another assignment.](#)

[RIT team missed on structure fire dispatch](#)

[Failure to follow RIT policy delays response to mayday](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[U.S. Fire Administration Research Topic: Rapid Intervention Teams](#)

[FirefighterNation.com Article: RIT Best Practices](#)

[Safetystandown.org Resources](#)