

FFS DISORIENTED AT COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE FIRE

SUMMARY

Firefighters advancing a hose line during a commercial fire become disoriented. Instead of calling the mayday, they attempt to self-rescue, almost leading to an out-of-air situation.

EVENT DESCRIPTION

Another firefighter and I pulled a pre-connected hoseline into an old grocery store that was being converted to a daycare. Inside the building there was heavy black smoke and limited visibility. Together, we stretched the pre-connect and came up short in regard to the location of the fire. The decision was made to extend the hoseline by connecting it to another pre-connected line. While this was being done, we decided to try and locate the fire. We did locate the fire, but became disoriented and were unable to find the hoseline or exit. We did not radio for help and continued to try to find the hose or exit. We eventually stumbled onto the hoseline and were able to find our way out. Low air bells had been ringing for some time and each of us had less than 200 psi on exit.

View the Report: [Crew disoriented at commercial structure fire](#)

TAKE AWAYS

Becoming disoriented can occur at any incident. Are you ready? What have you done to prepare for that moment you find that you are disoriented? The lessons learned by the submitter, were to obviously maintain orientation by staying in contact with the hose line but also communicate with command on what's going on.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does your department have a policy/guideline dealing with fire ground disorientation? If so, what does it say? If not, is one necessary? Why or why not?
 2. What do you do if you become disoriented in a fire building?
 3. What do you do if another firefighter becomes disoriented on scene? What do you do if they are on your crew versus another company or department?
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LEADING PRACTICES

To adequately prepare for a disoriented situation, the most efficient way may be to learn from being in that situation. Maintaining the mental discipline while communicating to command your situation is important. So when training, there must be stress. The stress may come from distracting noise, limiting time or exposing personnel to unknown buildings and experiencing the task of finding their way out while also completing necessary communication. Using your department's knowledge base, discuss with other personnel various tips for using the hoseline as a guide and practice finding the way out using not just a straight hoseline but a tangled one. Also, prepare when you arrive on scene. Complete a 360 if possible prior to entering the building, even if you're an additional crew.

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[Crew Becomes Disoriented During Search](#)

[Mayday Called By Lost Firefighter](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[2017 Safety Stand Down Resources](#)

[IAFF Fire Ground Survival Program](#)

[U.S. Firefighter Disorientation Study](#)

[Smoke and FF Disorientation: The Link to Firefighter Fatalities and Injuries](#)