Rogers Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide policy to incident commanders regarding fire supression and the associated modes of operations.

POLICY

It is standard operating procedure to attempt to stabilize fire conditions by extending, wherever and whenever possible, an aggressive, well-placed, and adequate offensive fire attack effort. Also we shall support that aggressive attack with whatever resource and action is required to reduce fire extension and to bring the fire under control. It shall be the policy of the department to begin extinguishment through water application as quick as possible..

A critical command decision (both initial and on-going) relates to the offensive/defensive mode of the situation:

1. Offensive Strategy – Exterior and interior attack and related support directed toward quickly bring the fire under control.
2. Defensive Strategy – Exterior attack directed to first reduce fire extension and then bring the fire under control.

The decision criteria that determine which strategy is selected are:

1. Fire extent
2. Structural stability
3. Ingress and egress capability
4. Smoke conditions, extent, and the ability to effectively ventilation
5. Status of viable occupants
6. Resources available

The basic strategic plans for both offensive and defensive operations are described in the chart below:

Offensive Mode	Defensive Mode
Strong command presence	Strong command presence
Fast, aggressive attack that includes interior suppression	Evaluate fire spread; write-off lost property
Support activities – Ventilation, Overhaul	Find good exterior positions for large streams
Quick and effective primary search	Prepare for big water supply needs
Stretch a second hoseline for backup	Surround and drown the structure(s)
Quickly evaluate success or failure	

Offensive Operations

Many times offensive/defensive conditions are clear cut and the IC can quickly determine the appropriate strategy. In other cases, the situation is *transitional* and the incident command must initiate an offensive interior attack while first using large diameter exterior hose lines and fire streams. The effect of the interior attack must be evaluated and the attack abandoned if conditions aren't improving. During a transitional attack, the incident commander should be ready to switch to a defensive strategy. Mode changes can develop almost instantly or can take considerable time. The IC must be aware and responsive to such mode changes.

The IC must consider the flow path of the fire and determine how this affects fire suppression and search and rescue activities. Incident commanders and other supervisors on the fireground should carefully evaluate intentional ventilation openings and unintentional ventilation openings to ensure they don't place firefighters or victims in further danger. The IC must allocate resource based upon this fire spread evaluation.

In some cases, the most effective tactical analysis involves an evaluation of 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 requirements. Although offensive fires are often fought from the interior-unburned side, water should be applied on the fire from the quickest route possible. Oftentimes, the quickest way to apply water to a fire that is visible from the outside is through a door or window. Applying water from the exterior for 15-20 seconds, followed by an interior attack is considered a best practice. Some fires, especially those not visible from the exterior, or difficult to access from the outside, may be fought offensively from the interior without any exterior water application.

Initial attack efforts must be directed toward supporting primary search. The first attack line must go between the victims and the fire to protect avenues of escape. Determine fire location and extent before starting fire suppression

operations (as far as possible). Fire streams operated into smoke can cool the upper layers of the atmosphere and is an encouraged practice in the IDLH environment.

The IC must not lose sight of the very simple and basic fireground reality that at some point the crews assigned to fire attack must engage and fight the fire. Command must structure whatever resources are available to simply put water on the fire. All fireground problems are generally solved by a fast, strong, well-placed fire attack.

Effective fire control requires that water is applied directly on the fire or directly into the fire area. Fire attack, as a component of the incident action plan must be capable of overpowering the fire with large amounts of uninterrupted water.

Where fires involve concealed spaces (attics, ceiling areas, construction voids) it becomes very important that companies open-up and operate fire streams into such areas. Early identification and response to concealed-space fires can save the structure. Fires in attics should be suppressed using conventional interior methods and an exterior “eave attack”. An eave attack involves wetting the sheathing to slow fire spread to uninvolved areas of the attic. Properly pressurized nozzles will allow water to puncture the soffit and stop the horizontal spread of fire.

If a fire starts on the outside of a structure, firefighters are encouraged to start fighting the fire from the outside. Rapid water application to knock down an exterior fire is a critical part of the IAP. If the source of the fire is not suppressed, it will continue to supply heat energy to the interior, thus worsening conditions for any potential occupants.

Defensive Operations

The decision to operate in a defensive mode indicates that the offensive attack mode has been abandoned or discarded for reasons of personnel safety, and the involved structure has been conceded as lost.

When defensive mode is selected, the IC shall ensure that it is announced over the radio. In cases where firefighting operations have already begun in offensive positions, the announcement has to be made and all companies must acknowledge the transmissions. Company Officers will account for the safety of all personnel and advise the IC of evacuation completion. A Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) shall follow any change in operating mode.

Interior hoselines will be withdrawn (or abandoned if necessary) and repositioned when changing to a defensive mode. Lines should not be operated directly into doorways or windows but should be backed away to positions which will protect exposures. All exposures, both immediate and anticipated, must be identified and covered. The first priority in defensive operations is to protect exposures and the lives they contain. The second priority may be to knock down the main

body of the fire. This may assist in the protection of exposures but does not replace it as a first priority. Master streams are generally the most effective tactic to be employed in defensive operations. Using small diameter handlines should be discouraged as they do not produce the needed fire flow for a well involved, defensive operation.

Radio Benchmark

For both offensive and defensive operations, the completion of bringing the fire under control is reported utilizing the standard radio-reporting term: “FIRE UNDER CONTROL.” It is the responsibility of Command to transmit this report to Dispatch. This time will be recorded by Dispatch.

“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 does not mean the fire is completely out.