



# Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS

## Standard Operating Procedure

### DOCUMENT DETAILS

<b>Standard Operating Procedure: 4.2.1</b>	<b>Effective Date: 9/22/2025</b>
<b>Subject: Structural Firefighting</b>	<b>Section: Fire/Rescue Operations</b>
<b>Authorized: Deputy Chief Paul Supko</b>	<b>Revision Date: N/A</b>

**Applicability:**      ☒ Volunteer      ☒ Career

### I. PURPOSE

To establish a consistent framework of incident priorities and operational objectives for Carroll County Fire & EMS personnel operating at structure fire incidents.

### II. DEFINITIONS

**Defensive attack:** is when fire suppression efforts are conducted from the exterior of the structure, considering exposures.

**Offensive attack:** is when crews are actively suppressing fire in a forward offensive manner into the structure.

**Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC):** Designated unit(s) assigned specifically for the immediate search, rescue, and removal of injured, lost, or trapped firefighters operating at an incident. The RIC maintains readiness outside the hazard zone and takes no other operational assignments until relieved or released.

**Rapid Intervention Dispatch (RID):** A dispatch assignment that provides additional units to offset the impact of establishing a dedicated RIC operation on a working incident.

**Strategy:** Refers to one of three actions used to combat a structure fire in this policy. Strategy is determined by available water, personnel and the condition of the structure.

**Transitional attack:** is when actions are taken to suppress fire load from the exterior of the structure and transition to an offensive attack.

### III. PROCEDURES

- A. **Determining Incident Strategy** – Offensive, Defensive or Transitional strategies shall be determined by the following factors:

**1. Available Water**

- a. Water supply is a critical factor in determining fire suppression tactics and overall incident strategy.
- b. A reliable water source must be identified immediately.
- c. The lack of a reliable water supply will limit an offensive fire attack.

**2. Available Personnel**

- a. On scene personnel availability directly influences the decision to initiate offensive, defensive, or transitional tactics.
- b. A lack of personnel available to perform the required back up tasks, 2 out, back up handlines, ladders, and ventilation will limit the offensive attack option.

**3. Condition of the Structure**

- a. Structural integrity determines the safety and effectiveness of an interior operation.
- b. Many factors must be considered not limited to:
  - i. Type of construction,
  - ii. Occupancy type,
  - iii. Level of involvement, and
  - iv. Prior condition of the building.

- B. **Determining Tactical Priorities using RECEO-VS.**

**1. Priority #1 Rescue**

- a. **Life safety is the highest priority at all structure fires.**
  - i. The potential for life loss is most prominent in residential occupancies.
  - ii. This strategic objective is achieved through interior fire containment and primary search.
  - iii. All operational tactics should be assigned in support of this.
- b. When it has been confirmed that the structure's occupants are accounted for (self-evacuated, evacuated with assistance, or rescued), the strategic objective then moves to focus on firefighter safety and fire extinguishment.
  - i. The first unit on the scene generally receives evacuation status information.
  - ii. Upon arrival, gather information from the occupants who left the building or neighbors standing outside and communicate this information to all incoming units.

- c. The rescue objective is addressed by a thorough interior primary search for life that focuses on tenable areas adjacent to the fire area, bedrooms, and means of egress.
- d. A crew with a hoseline should be assigned the floor being searched to protect crews conducting the search.
- e. Coordinated ventilation is critical in facilitating a primary search. This may be easily achieved through the opening or removal of select windows where occupants might be located.

## **2. Priority #2 Exposures**

- a. Interior exposure issues should be addressed through rapid containment of the fire.
- b. This includes advancing an interior attack line to protect any occupants within the structure, focusing on the interior stairway if present, or other vertical voids.
- c. The interior fire will be of two types:
  - i. Fires involving only contents
  - ii. Fires that involve the contents and structural components.
    - 1) This scenario provides the means for fire to extend throughout the structure.
- d. The conservation of property without undue risk to firefighters should be a strategic goal throughout the entire incident.
- e. Exterior exposure issues should be addressed through tactics appropriate for the situation.

## **3. Priority #3 Confinement**

- a. Tactics appropriate for the situation should be used to confine the fire rapidly.
- b. If rapid extinguishment is thought to be unattainable, a hoseline(s) must be assigned in such a way as to protect the occupants, including crews operating above the fire.
- c. In most cases, strategically stretching a handline(s) above the fire and to the side(s) of the fire accomplishes the goal of confinement.
- d. In fires with attached similar structures, a hoseline should be stretched to the structure(s) on each side of the fire.

## **4. Priority #4 Extinguishment**

- a. The extinguishment of the fire is achieved through the proper selection, placement, and application of the attack line(s).
  - i. The compartmentalization generally found within single and multiple-family dwellings and the fire loading suggests that a 1¾-inch attack line should be effective in fires involving only contents.
  - ii. In general, fires involving structural components will require the support of several mobile attack lines.
- b. When higher GPMs are required on the exterior, it is acceptable to use two 1¾-inch lines side by side.

- i. They will deliver more GPMs than one 2½-inch line, which is generally done only on the exterior of the single-family dwelling due to restricted mobility and required staffing.
- ii. In addition, when using the two 1¾-inch lines initially on the exterior, the two lines can easily be redeployed once the fire is knocked down.
- c. In situations when a 2 ½ hoseline is warranted, such as commercial occupancies or larger residential buildings, the decision to stretch a 2 ½ hoseline should also consider the staffing and water available.

## **5. Priority #5 Overhaul**

- a. The type of construction directly affects fire travel.
- b. Overhaul describes a systematic approach to making sure there are no further traces of fire in the structure.
  - i. This entails searching for hidden fires to ensure we leave the structure in as safe a condition as possible.
- c. Overhaul requires checking all levels within the structure.
- d. Fire should be suspected of having entered all vertical and horizontal void spaces until proven otherwise.

## **6. Priority #6 Ventilation & Salvage**

- a. Coordinated ventilation during a fire should generally be achieved through natural horizontal methods.
  - i. The reason for venting should be identified and communicated to the assigned units.
- b. The need for roof openings will typically only be required when the fire has entered the attic area or has gained access to vertical void spaces.
- c. Conventional construction provides the needed support to accomplish rooftop ventilation.
- d. Lightweight construction does not provide the support necessary and may result in early collapse.
- e. Crews ordered to perform rooftop ventilation in lightweight construction should be independently supported by aerial devices or a roof ladder.
- f. Salvage of property and belongings will always be crucial to serving the community.

## **C. Incident Operations:**

Reference Policy 4.1.3 Radio Reports for BIR, 360 and Entry Report expectations.

### **1. Brief Initial Report (BIR)**

- a. The first arriving unit of any type is responsible for providing a complete BIR.
- b. The BIR provided by the first arriving engine company (or unit) sets the tone for the incident. When stating conditions, keep it simple, only stating nothing, smoke or fire showing.

- c. All units will follow their running assignment regardless of conditions stated.

## **2. Initial 360 report**

- a. The first arriving unit of any type is responsible for ensuring the completion of a 360 assessment and report.
  - i. If the first arriving officer individually does not complete the 360 report, it must be specifically delegated to another unit able to complete the task immediately.
- b. The initial 360 report is not intended to verbalize every hazard identified. It should only relay critical facts that will determine initial actions of the first arriving crews.
  - i. e.g. Difference in elevation changes, location of fire and victims, conditions on the lowest level.
  - ii. Example – *“Command to all units on the 360, 2 stories in the front, 3 in the rear with a walk out basement, no smoke or fire in the basement, fire from floor #2 on the Charlie side”*
- c. The officer should not make an entry report as part of the 360 – The two reports must be independent.
- d. A more descriptive 360 report may be provided by the Safety Officer and or RIC, Crew leader.

## **3. Incident Action Plan - “Entry Report”**

- A. When a crew enters an IDLH or potential IDLH they will transmit their Entry Report.  
*Ex. “Engine 54 entering side alpha for fire attack with an 1 ¾ to the first floor **with 3.**”*
- B. Members will not enter a structure unless they are part of a crew, in PPE and reported in an Entry Report.
- C. Members arriving in an officer's car, SUV, medic unit or personal vehicle will not enter the hazard area without the incident commander and interior crew leader being aware.
  - a. Members arriving in an officer's car, SUV or personal vehicle and unable to safely join their crew will stage at the command post for an assignment.
  - b. Personnel arriving by SUV or personal vehicle will not operate independently and should attach to a unit operating on scene.
    - i. Ex. Utility 8 arrives on scene with 2 personnel. U8 is assigned to supplement Engine 81's crew.
  - c. The member's company officer shall give specific instructions as to the crew's location within the hazard zone.
  - d. The member shall proceed directly to the location identified by their company officer.
  - e. The member shall perform no task within the hazard zone before joining up with their crew.

- D. Unit Officers are responsible for maintaining crew integrity and accountability of personnel. PARs are conducted through individual companies, not divisions or groups.

#### **4. CAN Report**

- A. All additional reports will follow the Location-Conditions-Actions- Needs

#### **5. Exit Report**

- A. Crews exiting an IDLH will report that they are out of the building with their staffing number.

### **D. Tactical Considerations:**

#### **1. Establishing 2 out**

- a. Two out must be established prior to making entry into an IDLH unless there is a known rescue.

#### **2. Fire Suppression**

The status of the fire, including smoke conditions, and the stability of the structure must be continuously compared against the strategy, incident objectives, and tactics to ensure maximum effectiveness.

- a. Personnel must consider the survivability of occupants as part of the ongoing scene evaluation.
- b. Fire suppression should begin on the lowest level of the structure where fire is present.
- c. When a fire is primarily concentrated on the outside of a structure, fire suppression should begin on the outside.
- d. Interior firefighting shall not occur directly above uncontrolled fires in structures unless the occupants are known to be trapped and operating above the fire is required to preserve life.
- e. Consider fire flow paths while deploying initial attack lines and conducting ventilation.
- f. Once committed to an interior attack position, the primary attack line must be provided a backup line until the fire is controlled, except as necessary to preserve life.
- g. In general, only two attack lines should be stretched through anyone opening. (Must maintain awareness of opposing hose lines)
- h. An engine company arriving before special services must be prepared to force entry into structures.
- i. Units taking positions at reported structure fires must avoid parking in potential collapse zones

### **3. Interior Searches**

- a. Whenever the size up supports an interior fire attack operation a search of the structure must occur as well.
- b. Whenever possible, the secondary search of any given area should not be completed by the same crews that conducted the primary search.
- c. When a specific unit is tasked with ensuring that a systematic search has been completed, unit officers are not relieved from searching areas as they move through the structure.

#### **E. Additional Considerations**

1. Anytime an IDLH is present the RID should be requested early.
2. When a second or greater alarm is requested the IC shall identify a staging area for those units when requested as necessary.
3. Once a working incident is confirmed and until a stationary command post is established, incident communications must be limited to critical incident needs such as water supply and occupant status.

## **IV. RECISION**

This Standard Operating Procedure rescinds all directives regarding Structural Firefighting or similar content previously issued for personnel of the Carroll County Department of Fire & EMS.

## **V. RELATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES / DOCUMENTS**

None.

## **VI. ATTACHMENTS**

None.