

**TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**SECTION: Firefighting
SUBJECT: Structure Fires (general)
REVISED: 7/2013**

PURPOSE:

- A. To provide a means of suppressing fires when they occur within a structure.
- B. To establish guidelines so that all personnel shall have a clear understanding of their responsibilities at the scene of a structure fire.

POLICY:

These guidelines should be followed whenever a fire occurs within a structure.

PROCEDURES:

- A. Upon arrival:
 - 1. The first in officer shall give a brief condition report.
 - a. Number of stories.
 - b. Type of structure.
 - c. What is showing.
 - d. From what side the problem is showing.
 - e. Report exposures.
 - f. Who is in command.
 - 2. Conduct an on the spot size-up.
 - a. What have I got?
 - b. What is burning?
 - c. Where is it going?
 - d. What and who is in its way?
 - e. Do I need additional help?
 - 3. The first arriving officer will take command.
- B. Communications and coordination. Good communications and proper coordination are essential at structure fires.
 - 1. The incident commander must provide the necessary coordination of the various ground activities.
 - 2. The incident commander must communicate all instructions and vital information clearly to those they are supervising.
- C. Tactical Considerations. The tactical objectives in fighting a structure fire shall be in order of priority as follows:
 - 1. Rescue
 - 2. Exposure protection
 - 3. Confinement
 - 4. Ventilation
 - 5. Extinguishment
 - 6. Salvage
 - 7. Overhaul

1. Rescue:
 - a. Humane life is the most important consideration at a fire or other emergency.
 - b. Rescue of humans override all other strategic considerations at a fire.
 - c. A primary and secondary search shall be conducted at all structure fires.
 - d. During searches, rooms will be marked with red search tape.
2. Exposure Protection:
 - a. Exposure protection is the strategy of preventing a fire from spreading to the uninvolved building(s), or in involved parts of the building.
 - b. The first in incident commander shall be responsible for the initial protection of exposures.
3. Confinement:
 - a. The strategy of confinement means preventing the fire from extending to uninvolved sections of the building.
 - b. Whenever possible, the most effective method of confining fire spread is a direct attack on the fire.
 - c. The incident commander shall decide weather to make an offensive approach, aggressive interior attack, or a defensive approach, attacking the fire from outside. There may be situations when both approaches could be used.
 - d. All avenues of fire spread must be considered examples: shafts, openings, utility raceways, ducts, type of construction, etc.
 - e. Where fires involve concealed spaces, such as attics, voids, ceilings, it becomes very important that ventilation be conducted and hose lines be operated into such areas.
4. Ventilation:
 - a. Based upon the situation. Ventilation may need to occur anytime during the operation.
 - b. Ventilation shall be employed to:
 1. Channel heat, smoke and flames from potential victims.
 2. To prevent back draft or flashover.
 3. To remove heat and smoke from the building so to reduce property damage.
 4. To allow the interior of the structure to be more tenable and safer for the firefighting operations.
5. Extinguishment:
 - a. In most fire situations a quick and aggressive attack on the seat of the fire will take care of rescue, exposures, and confinement at the same time.
 - b. The size-up will provide information as to techniques, equipment and manpower needs to overcome the fire.
6. Salvage:
 - a. Salvage may need to begin at various points during a fire operation.
 - b. Salvage is those operations required to safeguard personal property, furnishings, and unaffected portions of a structure from the effects of heat, smoke, fire, and the weather.
 - c. Salvage shall include:
 1. The use of salvage covers.
 2. Removing water from the structure.
 3. Removing furniture and personal belongings to a safe location.
 4. Debris removal.
 5. Removal of valuables from debris.
 6. Covering openings to keep weather out and to secure the building.

- d. All members are expected to perform in a manner that continually reduces loss during fire operations.
7. Overhaul:
- a. The purpose of overhaul is to make sure the fire is completely out.
 - b. Overhaul operations must be properly coordinated with fire investigation efforts.
 - c. Unsafe conditions should be identified early in the overhaul process and definite efforts made to avoid the possible problems associated with the same.
 - d. During overhaul most firefighters are more relaxed, tired, perhaps less alert and thus more apt to get injured.
 - e. Personnel should not remove their breathing apparatus until the area is completely cleared of toxic gases.
 - f. When available, fresh crews should perform overhaul.
 - g. Particular attention should be given to hidden areas during overhaul.
 - h. During overhaul care should be given to protect personnel from exposure to carbon monoxide and other by products of combustion. The CO detector should be used to monitor the CO levels until the drop below 35ppm to allow firefighters to remove their scba's.
8. Utility Control:
- a. Utilities should be shut down and brought under control to insure that they will not contribute to the fire's spread, overall damage or create any type of safety hazard.
 - b. All structure fires where electrical involvement or damage has occurred, request the response of the electrical company.
 - c. If necessary, shut down the gas lines at the meter and have the gas department notified.
9. Safety:
- a. Safety is an important aspect of all fire ground operations. Accomplishing fire ground objectives in a safe manner helps reduce firefighter injuries or death.
 - b. Members involved at structure fires shall wear appropriate protective clothing and self contained breathing apparatus.
 - c. Fire ground operations should not be carried out in a rush, but rather they should be accomplished at a reasonable pace which allows for operations to be completed in a safe and efficient manner.
 - d. Fire officers must constantly be aware of both fire and structural conditions which may deteriorate at a point which places firefighters in jeopardy.
 - e. Indications of the possibility of structural collapse and/or other life threatening occurrences shall be communicated to all personnel within the incidents perimeter **via three (3) long blasts from the apparatus air horns which calls for immediate exit from the structure.**
10. Life Safety to the Occupant:
- a. Is the number one priority.
 - b. Fire ground operations shall be coordinated and conducted in such a manner as to support life safety operations which may be currently under way.
 - c. Hose line placement and ventilation shall be coordinated so as affect safe and efficient rescue operations.
 - d. Use normal means of egress first.
 - e. Aerial ladders, ground ladders, fire escapes are considered to be secondary means of egress.
 - f. Provide for the care and medical needs of victims who have been removed from the fire building.

11. On-Site Equipment and Systems:
 - a. Utilize on-site fire protection equipment and systems to best advantage in accordance with the type of system and the fire situation.
 - b. FAST teams will be on scene and in place for all structure fires.