

# JOINT RESPONSE AGREEMENT

## MODEL STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

<b>SUBJECT:</b> <b>STRUCTURAL FIRE ATTACK</b> <b>OFFENSIVE FIRE CONTROL</b>	<b>PAGE(S):</b> <b>4</b>
<b>REVISED:</b>	

### **STRUCTURAL FIRE ATTACK** **Offensive Fire Control**

**October 8, 2009**  
**Page 1 of 4**

This guideline identifies Department procedures for an OFFENSIVE fire control strategy.

Within the framework of the Risk Management Plan, the structure should first be determined to be safe to enter and initiate an OFFENSIVE fire attack. Before initiating interior firefighting operations, crews should have a "GO" or "NO GO" attitude. Crews should adopt a "NO GO" attitude towards entering a burning structure until the following tactical benchmarks are achieved. Once these tactical benchmarks have been accomplished, crews may "GO" into the structure.

1. 360-walk around of structure utilizing a Thermal Imaging Camera where possible.
2. Primary water supply has been secured. Proper apparatus placement should occur in accordance with where possible.
3. Two-in and two-out: A minimum of two firefighters remaining outside the structure to assist the two interior firefighters with a pump operator who may also act as the Incident Commander. This requires a minimum of five (5) personnel on the scene before beginning an interior attack. The only deviation from this policy is during RESCUE mode when a known person is in peril and has been determined to be SAVABLE.
4. Command has been established.
5. All firefighters and Incident Command should be on the correct and same fireground channel.
6. Accountability has been established and passports secured.
7. A risk analysis conclusion that the benefit of entering the burning structure clearly outweighs the risk.

*When it is safe to do so*, The departments of the Joint Response Agreement should initiate offensive operations at structure fires. Once the structure is determined to be safe and the above tactical benchmarks have been completed, an OFFENSIVE fire attack should be centered around RESCUE. The following are guidelines for OFFENSIVE fire attacks:

---    **Deploy the Initial Attack Hoseline.**

The fire attack team is expected to initiate a fast, aggressive, interior attack with the appropriate size handline to locate, confine, and extinguish the fire. Offensive fires should be fought from

the INTERIOR, UNBURNED SIDE OF THE STRUCTURE WHEN CONDITIONS WARRANT to avoid contributing to fire spread. A fire attack initiated from the burned side will usually drive the fire, smoke, and heat back into the unburned portion of the building.

Initial attack efforts should be directed toward supporting the primary search. The first attack should go between the victims and the fire and to protect the avenues of escape. The first arriving company should determine the fire location and extent as soon as possible before starting fire operations. Hose streams should not be directed into smoke without a purpose.

Fire companies that are lacking direction when fire is showing from a structure often deploy hoselines and put water on the fire utilizing the fastest, shortest, most direct route. This process is called the “candle moth syndrome” (everyone wants to go to the flame). The fastest place to put water on the fire is generally from the outside at the point where the fire is venting out of the building (THIS IS THE WORST APPLICATION POINT MOST OF THE TIME). When fire is showing out of a building and not affecting exposures, it should be left alone. In these cases the fire is usually venting in the proper direction. An aggressive interior attack should be initiated from the unburned side of the structure instead of direct water application to the fire from the exterior. It requires discipline and training on the part of firefighters not to submit to the “candle moth” temptation.

❖ **Conduct a Primary Search.**

The number one priority of an OFFENSIVE attack is RESCUE. A quick, but thorough, primary search should be a high priority for the initial arriving companies.

❖ **Provide support activities.**

Support activities include, but are not limited to, ventilation, forcible entry, and establishment of a secondary water supply, as well as deployment of secondary or back-up hoseline, salvage and overhaul. These activities can be conducted as conditions warrant. Some, and possibly all, of these activities may be necessary. The Incident Commander should be aware of this and ensure that the necessary resources are on the scene to accomplish these objectives.

For example, EARLY VENTILATION is a major support item that is expected to be addressed during concealed space fire attacks. Ventilation should be initiated early and be well coordinated. Areas involving concealed spaces, attics, ceiling areas, or construction voids, should be “opened up” by ventilation crews using tools and thermal imaging cameras. Engine companies should then operate fire streams into these areas. Early identification and response to concealed space fires can reduce further fire loss. Firefighters who hesitate to “open-up” because they do not want to cause further damage to a building often times will find themselves faced with extensive fire damage.

❖ **Quickly evaluate success and react.**

It is the responsibility of all firefighters on the fireground to constantly evaluate the success, or lack thereof, of their assigned task and report this information to the Incident Commander. The

Incident Commander should quickly react to these reports to determine if it is appropriate to continue with the current strategy or change operating modes. Changes in fire conditions can occur instantly and the Incident Commander should be ready to respond to these changes.

The success of an interior attack should be evaluated depending on fireground factors and conditions and, if necessary, abandoned if the risk is too great for interior operating crews.

The Incident Commander should consider the most dangerous direction and avenues of fire extension, particularly as it affects rescue activities, confinement efforts, and exposure protection. The Incident Commander should allocate resources based on 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 activities.

However, the Incident Commander cannot lose sight that at some point the fire companies are expected to engage and fight the fire. The Incident Commander should structure whatever operations are required to put water on the fire. The rescue, fire control, extension and exposure problems should be solved in the majority of cases by a rapid, aggressive, well placed attack. Effective fire control requires that water be applied directly onto the fire or directly into the fire area. The Incident Commander should establish an attack plan that provides the appropriate amount of fire flow that will suppress the fire.

Time is an extremely important factor in attack operations. The larger the attack operation, the longer it takes to get it going. The Incident Commander should balance and integrate attack size and position with fire conditions and resources. In some instances, the tactical realities of the incident require that attack placement principles be violated. Such violations generally relate to the factor of time versus ideal placement. When such principles are violated, the Incident Commander should implement back-up action to cover the uncovered areas.

The Incident Commander should develop a fire control plan of attack that first stops the forward progress of the fire and then brings the fire under control. In large complex fires, the Incident Commander will not immediately have adequate resources to accomplish all attack objectives. At that point, the Incident Commander should prioritize attack efforts, act as a resource manager, and determine the resources for the eventual need. Accurate forecasting of conditions by the Incident Commander becomes critical during this evaluation process. The Incident Commander should develop critical decisions that relate to cut-off points and should approach fire spread determinations pessimistically. It takes a certain amount of time to "get water"; meanwhile the fire continues to burn while the attack is set up.

The Incident Commander should consider where the fire will be when attack efforts are ready to actually go into operation. If misjudged, the fire may burn past the attack/cut off point. Project

**STRUCTURAL FIRE ATTACK**  
**Offensive Fire Control**

**October 8, 2009**  
**Page 4 of 4**

your set up time, and don't get behind the fire. Set up adequately and efficiently for extinguishment of the fire. Do not continue to operate in positions that are essentially lost.

The Incident Commander should consider 7 sides of the fire: front, back, two sides, roof, bottom, and interior. Use of the Mini-IMAT team can assist the Incident Commander when making these considerations.