

# JOINT RESPONSE AGREEMENT

## MODEL STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

<b>SUBJECT:</b> <b>STRUCTURAL FIRE ATTACK</b> <b>TACTICAL PRIORITIES / RESCUE</b>	
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**STRUCTURAL FIRE ATTACK**  
**Tactical Priorities/Rescue**

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This guideline provides Department procedures for performing the rescue function at fire emergencies.

It is standard operating procedure to conduct a primary search in all involved and exposed occupancies that can be entered. The Incident Commander should include a primary search as part of the initial Incident Action Plan, with TIME being the critical factor in the primary search process. The primary search is also intended to help determine whether a fire does exist. A PRIMARY SEARCH is defined as:

**"A COMPANY FROM THE FIRST ALARM ASSIGNMENT THAT HAS QUICKLY GONE THROUGH ALL AFFECTED AREAS AND HAS ATTEMPTED TO VERIFY THE REMOVAL AND/OR SAFETY OF ALL OCCUPANTS."**

The rescue functions that follow fire control activities should be identified as a secondary search. A SECONDARY SEARCH is defined as:

**"A THOROUGH SEARCH OF THE INTERIOR OF A BUILDING THAT HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN FIRE AFTER THE INITIAL FIRE CONTROL AND VENTILATION ACTIVITIES HAS BEEN COMPLETED."**

If possible, a different company than the one that completed the primary search should complete the secondary search. THOROUGHNESS rather than time is the critical factor when performing the secondary search.

The stage of the fire is a critical factor affecting rescue. The following items outline the basic command approach to handling rescue in conjunction with the stage of the fire.

In a "**NOTHING SHOWING**" situation or in very minor fire cases that appear to pose no life hazard, the Incident Commander should insure a rapid interior search and report an "ALL CLEAR".

In a "**SMOKE SHOWING**" situation and working fire situations, fire control efforts should be initiated simultaneously with rescue operations in order to complete a primary search. The

Incident Commander and all operating companies are expected to understand they are still operating under the rescue mode until a primary search has been completed, regardless of the fire control required. In working fire situations, the primary search should be followed by a secondary search.

In cases of fully involved buildings or sections of buildings, immediate entry and primary search activities often become impossible and survival of occupants is improbable. The Incident Commander should give a report of the conditions and advise that a primary search is not possible. As soon as fire containment has been achieved, the Incident Commander should start a primary search for victims based upon building conditions.

The Incident Commander should consider the following factors in developing a basic rescue size-up:

- Number, location, and condition of victims.
- Effect the fire has on the victims.
- Capability of firefighters to enter the building to remove or protect the victims and control the fire.

The Incident Commander should make the following basic rescue decision:

- Should the victims be removed from the fire or should the fire be isolated from the victims?

Rescue efforts should be conducted in the following order:

- Most severely threatened
- The largest number of occupants
- Victims in the remaining fire area
- People in other exposed areas

Normal means of interior access such as stairs, halls, and interior public areas should be utilized to remove victims whenever possible. Secondary means of rescue like platforms, ladders, fire escapes, and helicopters should be utilized in their order of effectiveness.

The Incident Commander should always remember that in large buildings additional resources may have to be called to assist in the primary search. The most urgent reason for calling additional resources should be for the purpose of covering life safety. **DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL AND STAGE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.**

On large complex occupancies, the Incident Commander should make specific primary search assignments and maintain on-going control of such companies until the entire area is

searched. When primary search companies encounter and remove victims, the Incident Commander should assign other companies to continue to cover the interior positions.

In some cases, occupants are safer being sheltered in place than moving through contaminated hallways and interior areas. The Incident Commander should evaluate the resources required to actually remove victims and, if needed, treat injuries.

It is the Incident Commander's responsibility to arrange for treatment after removal. Multiple victims should be removed to one location for more effective triage/treatment. The Incident Commander should coordinate and utilize paramedic units whenever available and assign treatment companies as required to an exterior medical treatment area.