

# Egg Harbor Fire Department and First Responders Standard Operating Guideline

**SUBJECT: INTERIOR STRUCTURE FIREFIGHTING**

**SOG 807**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this standard operating guideline is to provide a guideline for all personnel in interior structure firefighting and to help ensure the safety of the fire department personnel while performing work inside a structure.

**SCOPE:** This procedure applies to all members of the Egg Harbor Fire Department.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

- A. Interior structural firefighting:** The physical activity of fire suppression, rescue or both, inside of buildings or enclosed structures which are involved in a fire situation beyond the incipient stage (IDLH atmosphere; An atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive or asphyxiate substance that poses an immediate threat to life or would cause irreversible or delayed adverse health effects or would interfere with an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.).
- B. Incipient Fire:** The beginning of a fire, where the oxygen content in the air has not been significantly reduced and the fire is producing minute amounts of water vapor, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and other gases; the room has a normal temperature and can be controlled or extinguished with a portable fire extinguisher or small hose, e.g., a kitchen stove fire.
- C. Incipient stage firefighting:** Involves the control or extinguishment of a fire in its beginning stage, using portable fire extinguishers or small hose lines without the need for personal protective equipment. Interior incipient fires expose firefighters to limited amounts of smoke and heat. Firefighters could safely approach and extinguish these fires without the need for self-contained breathing apparatus and, sometimes, without turnout gear although they would normally approach these incidents with full protective clothing and equipment.
- D. Initial stage (initial action):** Shall encompass the control efforts taken by resources which are first to arrive at an incident requiring immediate action to prevent or mitigate the loss of life or serious injury to citizenry and firefighters.
- E. Known Life Hazard:** A situation in which someone can be seen, heard, or a reliable report indicates that an individual is in a structure and immediate actions are needed.

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- F. Positive Communication:** Visual, audible, physical or electronic means which allows for two way message generation and reception.
- G. Rapid intervention team:** On-scene team of at least two members who are designated, dedicated and equipped to affect an immediate rescue operation if the need arises.
1. The Team shall be in a ready state to immediately react and respond to rescue injured or trapped firefighters and monitor radio traffic.
  2. Rapid intervention teams shall be fully equipped with the appropriate protective clothing, protective equipment, SCBA, search rope, TIC camera, RIT air pack, light, radio and any additional specialized rescue equipment needed, based on the specifics of the operation underway.
  3. The composition and structure of rapid intervention teams is to be flexible based on the type of incident, duration, size and complexity of the operation.
- H. Standby Mode:** Full personal protective clothing including SCBA with face piece in standby mode.
- I. Standby Firefighter:** A firefighter in standby mode, outside the hazard area, and available for immediate rescue.
- J. “Two-in, Two-out”:** The EHF standard that requires firefighters to work in teams of two or more when performing interior structural firefighting (“two-in”). Additionally, when firefighters are performing interior structural firefighting there must be a minimum of two firefighters outside the hazard area (“two-out”)available and equipped to perform firefighter rescue (i.e. either “standby firefighters” or “rapid intervention team”). The “two-in, two-out” requirement does not take effect until firefighters begin to perform interior structural firefighting.
- K. A fire is considered "out" if:**
- a. Members are no longer involved in interior structural firefighting, and
  - b. Air monitoring verifies that the CO level in a structure’s interior is less than 35ppm, and
  - c. A scene survey has been completed by the Incident Safety Officer and the structure interior are cleared for work without respiratory protection.

## **PROCEDURES**

- A.** Members shall not make an interior entry in a fire situation without any standby firefighters.

- B. While performing interior structural firefighting, firefighters will work in teams of two or more and remain in voice, touch or visual contact with one another at all times.
- C. Before beginning interior structural firefighting operations, the incident commander shall evaluate the situation and risks to operating teams.
  - 1 Except as provided in SOG 203, Sections 5, firefighters must not engage in interior structural firefighting in the absence of at least two standby firefighters.
  - 2 All standby firefighters shall be fully equipped with the Appropriate protective clothing, protective equipment and SCBA (All standby firefighters shall be in standby mode)
  - 3 Standby members shall remain aware of the status of firefighters in the hazardous area and monitor radio traffic.
  - 4 Standby members may be permitted to perform other duties outside the hazardous area, provided constant communication is maintained between standby members and the entry team(s), and provided that those duties will not interfere with the standby members' ability to participate in a rescue as appropriate.
  - 5 Early consideration should be given to providing one or more Rapid intervention teams commensurate with the needs of the situation and shall be established upon arrival of additional crews.
  - 6 The initial size-up must take into account any atypical or unusual risks The Incident Commander cannot disregard safety even if other requirements for an initial attack with two standby firefighters have been met. In a similar fashion, the Incident Commander's later decisions regarding the size or number of the Rapid Intervention Team(s) should take into account factors that may require the IC to go beyond the minimums suggested by SOG 208.
  - 7. In the "initial stage" of a structure fire incident where only one team is operating in the hazardous area, where additional resources can reasonably be expected, and where exceptional circumstances indicate that immediate action may be necessary to mitigate the loss of life or serious injury to citizen's or firefighters, at least one additional firefighter must be assigned to stand by outside the hazardous area where the team is operating.
    - a. All standby firefighters shall be in standby mode.
    - b. Standby members shall remain aware of the status of firefighters in the hazardous area.

- c. Standby members may be permitted to perform other duties outside the hazardous area, provided constant communication is maintained between standby members and the entry team(s), and provided that those duties will not interfere with the standby members' ability to participate in a rescue as appropriate.
- d. Once additional resources have arrived on the scene, the incident shall no longer be considered in its initial stage and a RIT team will be established.
- e. Firefighters shall communicate crew status at suitable intervals.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A.** The responsibility of the Initial Stage standby firefighter shall be to maintain awareness of the status of firefighters in the hazardous area.
- B.** The Incident Commander is responsible for evaluating the situation and risks to operating crews with respect to the purpose and potential results of their actions in each situation.
- C.** It is the Incident Commander's responsibility, based on training and experience, to judge whether a fire is an interior structural fire and how it will be attacked.
- D.** It is recognized that every situation is unique. The ability for an Incident Commander to use discretion on a situational specific basis is very important. It is not the intent of this guideline to mandate how an Incident Commander will react in every situation.
- E.** Nothing in this guideline prevents activities which may be taken by members first on the scene to determine the nature and extent of fire involvement including potential life safety hazards. Entry may be made using a protective hose line. Actions taken preceding initial stage include extinguishment of incipient fire, opening doors and windows for natural ventilation, escorting occupants outside.