



Roosevelt Fire District
Standard Operating Guidelines

<u>Section:</u> Operations	<u>Guideline #18:</u> Fire Ground Strategy
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FIRE GROUND STRATEGY

The following procedure outlines the fire ground strategy to be utilized at all structure fires. Additional SOGs will further discuss operations at the various types of structures typically found within the Fire District, and the duties/responsibilities/assignments of various apparatus and responders.

Managing the fire ground strategy must start with the arrival of the first unit and be continually monitored and evaluated throughout the entire duration of the incident. If command is transferred to later arriving officers, those officers assuming command must evaluate the fire ground strategy based upon these principles and make changes, as necessary.

Fire ground strategy provides a starting point to begin fire ground operations. Once the Operational Mode is announced, all members present should know their roles and responsibilities according to their training, SOGs, and other district policies and procedures.

INCIDENT PRIORITIES

While it is recognized that every incident is different, the establishment of rigid incident priorities is critical to guide officers and members in their decision-making. These incident priorities are always to be kept paramount while operating at the scene of an incident. They are a guide to all decisions made on the fire ground. Based upon a complete size-up of the incident and other variables associated with the scene, the following is established as our incident priorities.

1. Life Safety
2. Incident Stabilization
3. Property Conservation
4. Environmental Protection

RISK MANAGEMENT

It is the responsibility of Incident Command to continually evaluate conditions on the fire ground, and to make operational decisions that serve not only the best interests of the

community, but also of our responders. Fire ground operations are dynamic, and often represent an immediately dangerous and life-threatening (IDLH) environment for both civilians and responders. Incident Commanders MUST continually balance these risks. With that in mind, the following is established as our guiding Risk Management Principle.

1. We will risk the lives of responders to protect savable lives
2. We will operate under marginal conditions to protect savable property
3. We will not risk the lives of our responders at all to try to save what is already lost

OPERATIONAL MODES

In addition to considering the Incident Priorities and Risk Management principles above, the following criteria will be used by the Incident Commander to determine Operational Mode:

- Building – construction, age, condition, etc.
- Structural Integrity – contents fire vs. structural involvement
- Fire Load – what type(s) of fuel is burning, & what is left to burn
- Fire and/or Smoke Conditions – extent, location, volume, pressure, color, etc.
- Rescue/Survivability Profile – where in the structure could viable victims be located

The Operational Mode can (and will likely) change during the incident, as conditions change, available staffing/resources improves, or because certain benchmarks are obtained (i.e. Primary Search complete, etc.) It is critical that everyone on the fire ground know the Operational Mode being utilized at any given time. To accomplish this, the Incident Commander must clearly announce & communicate the Operational Mode in effect. It is always the responsibility of every officer and member present at the scene to know the Operational Mode in effect and ensure that all members are operating within the announced strategy. By controlling the global fire ground strategy, the Incident Commander is providing for overall scene safety, thereby reducing the risks to our members. **It is critical that only 1 Operational Mode be employed at any given time, in the same fire area.** For example, simultaneous use of both Offensive and Defensive Operations in the same fire area is inherently dangerous and SHALL NOT be allowed. For this reason, the IC is the only person allowed to make decisions regarding Operational Mode or changing to a different Mode.

Fire ground operations fall within one of the following Operational Modes: Investigative, Offensive, Rescue, Defensive or Transitional.

Investigative: Used when there is nothing showing upon arrival, or the exact extent of the incident is unclear/unknown. Command is established, and crew(s) are deployed to investigate and report back. Full PPE is required, and appropriate hand tools, extinguishers, etc. are to be carried. Basic preplans for apparatus positioning are still to be followed. Laying supply lines or pulling hand lines are deferred until ordered by IC. Later arriving apparatus should stage, remain uncommitted, and await further orders.

Offensive: Used when active fire is known to be present, and the Incident Commander has determined that an Interior Attack is warranted, based upon our Incident Priorities and Risk

Management principles. It is to be considered our primary mode of fire ground operations if it is safe to do so. Responders should follow all appropriate SOGs and Preplans, and the orders of their officers for determining their actions and responsibilities. We cannot be operating in Offensive Mode if 2 Out is not established!! **Freelancing will not be tolerated.**

Rescue: Used ONLY when there is a known life hazard within the structure. It is the only time that we will commit resources within a structure without first having called for a FAST team and established a 2-in-2-out team. (“On Deck”) Refer to appropriate SOG for further detail.

Defensive: Used when available resources are not sufficient for interior operations, or building conditions prevent safe interior operations. The Defensive mode is intended to contain the incident through exposure protection and/or exterior operations. In situations where Defensive Mode is the initial operation, there shall be no Primary Search conducted. In situations where Incident Command is making a change from Offensive to Defensive Mode, an announcement to EVACUATE will be made on all fireground radio channels currently in use, and the air horn of the attack engine shall be sounded repeatedly. A full Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) shall be conducted and reported to Command PRIOR to initiating any master streams.

Transitional: Used initially, when the first arriving units have either insufficient staffing for an offensive interior attack, or the volume of fire present upon arrival represents an unmanageable risk to responders. This mode is intended to “soften up” the interior, by initially directing hose streams into the building from the exterior, with a plan to switch to an Offensive Mode, once conditions improve, and/or additional resources arrive. It shall be up to Incident Command to determine how to best accomplish this. Deck Guns, master streams, large diameter handlines (2½”) or Pre-connected handlines (1½” or 1¾”) could all be used, depending upon the circumstances. As staffing and other circumstances permit, preparation for transitioning to Offensive Mode can be undertaken simultaneously with a Transitional attack. Handlines can be pulled to the point of entry, attack crews with proper hand tools assembled, etc. There are NO INTERIOR OPERATIONS during the Transitional phase. The IC is the only one to determine when it is time to change the Operational Mode to Interior.

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