



Rogers Fire Department
Tactics
503 Fire Suppression
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide policy to incident commanders regarding fire suppression and the associated modes of operations.

POLICY

It is standard operating procedure to attempt to stabilize fire conditions by extending, wherever and whenever possible, an aggressive, well-placed, and adequate offensive interior fire attack effort. Also we shall support that aggressive attack with whatever resource and action is required to reduce fire extension and to bring the fire under control.

A critical Command decision (both initial and on-going) relates to the offensive/defensive mode of the situation:

1. Offensive Strategy – Interior attack and related support directed toward quickly bring the fire under control.
2. Defensive Strategy – Exterior attack directed to first reduce fire extension and then bring the fire under control.

The decision criteria that determine which strategy is selected are:

1. Fire extent
2. Structural stability
3. Ingress and egress capability
4. Smoke conditions, extent, and the ability to effectively ventilation
5. Status of viable occupants
6. Resources available

The basic strategic plans for both offensive and defensive operations are described in the chart below:

Offensive	Defensive
Strong command presence	Strong command presence
Fast, aggressive interior attack	Evaluate fire spread; write-off lost property
Support activities – Ventilation, Overhaul	Find good exterior positions for large streams
Quick and effective primary search	Prepare for big water supply needs
Stretch a second hoseline for backup	Surround and drown the structure(s)
Quickly evaluate success or failure	



Offensive Operations

Many times offensive/defensive conditions are clear cut and Command can quickly determine the appropriate strategy. In other cases, the situation is *marginal* and Command must initiate an offensive interior attack while setting up defensive positions on the exterior. The effect of the interior attack must be evaluated and the attack abandoned if necessary. In marginal offensive operations, command should be ready to switch to a defensive strategy once an 'ALL CLEAR' is given. Mode changes can develop almost instantly or can take considerable time. Command must be aware and responsive to such mode changes.

Command must consider the most dangerous direction and avenues of fire extension, particularly as they affect rescue activities, confinement efforts, and exposure protection. Command must allocate resource based upon 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 requirements. Offensive fires should be fought from the interior-unburned side (interior capability is the principle offensive strategy factor).

Initial attack efforts must be directed toward supporting primary search. The first attack line must go between the victims and the fire to protect avenues of escape. Determine fire location and extent before starting fire operations (as far as possible). As a general rule, do not operate fire streams into smoke without purpose.

Command must not lose sight of the very simple and basic fireground reality that at some point the crews assigned to fire attack must engage and fight the fire. Command must structure whatever resources are available to simply put water on the fire. The rescue/fire control/extension/exposure problem is solved in the majority of cases by a fast, strong, well-placed attack.

Effective fire control requires that water is applied directly on the fire or directly into the fire area. Command and assigned crews must recognize that fire streams can be bounced off roofs and operated into smoke all night and the fire will progress until it runs out of fuel. Command must establish an attack plan that overpowers the fire with actual water application.



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Where fires involve concealed spaces (attics, ceiling areas, construction voids) it becomes very important that companies open-up and operate fire streams into such areas. Early identification and response to concealed-space fires can save the structure. Officers who hesitate to open-up because they don't want to beat up the building, may lose the structure.

Defensive Operations

The decision to operate in a defensive mode indicates that the offensive attack strategy has been abandoned for reasons of personnel safety, and the involved structure has been conceded as lost (written off).

When defensive mode is selected, the incident commander shall ensure that it is announced over the radio. In cases where firefighting operations have already begun in offensive positions, the announcement has to be made and all companies acknowledge the transmissions. Captains will account for the safety of all personnel and advise Command of evacuation completion. A Personnel Accountability Report shall follow any change in operating mode.

Interior lines will be withdrawn (or abandoned if necessary) and repositioned when changing to a defensive mode. Lines should not be operated directly into doorways or windows but should be backed away to positions which will protect exposures. All exposures, both immediate and anticipated, must be identified and covered. The first priority in defensive operations is to protect exposures. The second priority may be to knock down the main body of the fire. This may assist in the protection of exposures but does not replace it as a first priority. Master streams are generally the most effective tactic to be employed in defensive operations. Using small diameter handlines should be discouraged as they do not produce the needed fire flow for a well involved, defensive operation.

Radio Benchmark

For both offensive and defensive operations, the completion of bringing the fire under control is reported utilizing the standard radio-reporting term: "FIRE UNDER CONTROL." It is the responsibility of Command to transmit this report to Dispatch. This time will be recorded by Dispatch.

"FIRE UNDER CONTROL" means the forward progress of the fire has been stopped and the remaining fire can be extinguished with the on-scene resources; it does not mean the fire is completely out.