

Salt River Fire Department Operating Guidelines

Support Activities

April 2000

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Tactical support activities are those functions that assist active fire control and rescue operations. They generally include forcible entry, ventilation and the provision of access. Confusion on the fireground may be the result of lack of such support functions and does not generally relate to a breakdown of basic water application activities. Command must cause these support functions to be completed in a timely and effective manner--he/she must support the end of the nozzle. We lose most often because of a lack of support, not a lack of water.

You ventilate a building principally for two reasons:

- To prevent mushrooming
- To gain (and maintain) entry

Vertical ventilation, as close to directly over the fire as possible, is the most effective form of ventilation in working interior fire situations.

The timing of ventilation becomes extremely important and must be coordinated with fire attack activities –ventilation should be provided in advance of attack lines. Portable radio communications between engine and ladder companies facilitate this interaction.

Fire will naturally burn out of holes in roofs, regardless if you cut the hole or if the fire creates one.

If the fire burns through the roof (defensive ventilation), it will generally do so in the best location--directly over the fire.

If ladder companies cut the roof they must locate ventilation holes in a manner that will support rescue activities and fire confinement. If vent holes are cut in the wrong places, the fire will naturally be channeled to them and expand loss.

When you cut a hole in a roof, cut a big one.

We ventilate to alter interior conditions. The best operating position to determine if a building requires ventilation and the location and timing of that ventilation is the inside sector. Interior and roof forces must communicate in order to coordinate the effort effectively.

Do not operate hoselines, particularly ladder pipes, down ventilation holes. Be cautious of hoselines to roofs--"candle moth" syndrome tends to overpower personnel operating

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on roofs when fire and smoke come out vent holes. Operate roof lines only for the purpose of protecting personnel and external exposures, unless Command orders a coordinated roof attack.

Effective topside ventilation will tend to keep roofs intact longer and roof condition necessarily becomes extremely important to ventilation activities. If ladder crews cannot get on the roof to ventilate because of advanced fire, Command should begin to react in marginal offensive/defensive terms. Hose line crews can probably get inside and stay inside longer than ladder crews can stay on the roof. Axiom: It is better to abandon the building a bit too soon rather than a bit too late.

BOWSTRING TRUSS / ARCHED ROOF POLICY

For bowstring/arched roofs the policy is:

1. Firefighters are prohibited from accessing this type of roof. Ventilation will be accomplished through PPV.
2. When fire is in the attic/truss space, and it is safe to do so, quickly search the building and implement a defensive strategy.
3. When crews are unable to locate the fire, and it is safe to do so, quickly search the building and implement a defensive strategy.
4. When fire involves a room and contents with no evidence of extension to the attic/truss space – implement a quick, aggressive, offensive strategy.

RESIDENTIAL TILE ROOF POLICY

For interior and/or attic fires in single family residences with tiled roofs, firefighters are prohibited from going to the roof, at the discretion of the Incident Commander.

Forcible entry involves a trade-off in time versus damage; the faster you force--the more damage you do.

The more critical the fire, the less important forcible entry damage becomes and vice versa. If the fire is progressing and you must go in and attack from the unburned side, don't waste time trying to pick the locks--force the doors.

The provision of access many times will determine if the fire is cut off and extinguished or not.

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These access-oriented activities generally involve pulling ceilings, opening up concealed spaces and voids, and the activities required to get fire attack efforts in to operate on hidden fire. Such operations beat up the fire building and must be done in a timely, well-placed manner. In such cases, do not hesitate--if you size up fire working inside a concealed space, get ahead of it, open up and cut it off.

Beware of the premature opening of doors, holes, access efforts, etc. before lines are placed and crews are ready to go inside. Good timing requires effective communication between engine and ladder companies.