

Salt River Fire Department Operating Guidelines

Apparatus Placement

April 2000

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Apparatus function should regulate placement. Poor apparatus placement can reverse this rule, limiting the options or eliminating functions that can be assigned to a unit.

Firefighters operate with a natural inclination to drive the apparatus as close to the fire as possible.

This often results in positioning of apparatus that is both dysfunctional and dangerous. The placement of all apparatus on the fireground should be a reflection of the following:

- Standard operational procedure for first arriving companies.
- Tactical objectives and priorities.
- Staging procedure.
- A direct order from Command.
- A conscious decision on the part of the Company officer based on existing or predictable conditions.

Effective apparatus placement must begin with the arrival of first units. The placement of the initial arriving Engine, Ladder, and Rescue should be based upon initial size-up and general conditions upon arrival. First arriving companies should place themselves to maximum advantage and go to work; later arriving units should be placed in a manner that builds on the initial plan and allows for expansion of the operation.

Avoid front bumper to rear tailboard placement on the fireground. Do not drive all fire apparatus directly in to the fire scene. Later arriving companies should stage a minimum of one block short of the immediate fire area, and remain uncommitted until ordered into action by Command.

Company officers should select staged positions with a maximum of tactical options (See Level I Staging procedures).

In large, complex, and lengthy fireground operations additional alarm companies should be staged consistent with Level II Staging procedure. Under these procedures, Command communicates directly with the Staging Officer for the additional resources required on the fireground.

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Command must maintain an awareness of site access that provides the best tactical options.

The immediate fire area can quickly become congested with apparatus and the officer must regard apparatus on the fireground in two categories:

- Apparatus that is working
- Apparatus that is parked

Park out of the way. Apparatus that is not working should be left in the Staging Area or parked where it will not compromise access.

Maintain an access lane down the center of streets wherever possible.

Think of fire apparatus as an expensive exposure. Position working apparatus in a manner that considers the extent and location of the fire and a pessimistic evaluation of fire spread and building failure.

Anticipate the heat, which may be released with a structural collapse.

Forecast where the fire is going and how it will affect exposure of apparatus. Apparatus should generally be positioned at least 50 ft. away from involved buildings, even with nothing showing. Greater distances are indicated in many situations.

Beware of putting fire apparatus in places where they cannot be repositioned easily and quickly--particularly operating positions with only one way in and out; i.e., yards, alleys, driveways, etc.

Beware of overhead power lines when positioning apparatus. Do not park where lines may fall.

If apparatus does become endangered, activate engine sprinkler system (if available) and operate hoselines between it and the fire while you reposition it. When you do move it--move it to a position that is safe. It is dysfunctional to move apparatus several times throughout the progress of a fire.

Take maximum advantage of good operating positions and "build" the capability of units assigned to these effective positions. Initial arriving pumpers should be placed in "key" positions. These positions should offer maximum fire attack access to the fire area and be supplied with large diameter and/or pumped supply lines as quickly as possible. (Salt River Fire

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Department uses 4" diameter supply hose, which may require a pumped supply to optimize for fire flow.) Subsequent arriving companies can operate the hoselines from this apparatus. Place these "key" companies first--before later arriving units block access.

Key tactical positions should be identified and engines placed in those locations with a strong water supply. The water supply should be at least one LDH pumped line from an engine on a hydrant. When high volume is indicated, two pumped supply lines should be provided. The forward engine can distribute this water supply to a variety of hand lines, master streams or devices.

Take full advantage of hydrants close to the fire before laying additional supply lines to distant hydrants.

Secondary hydrants should be used to obtain additional supply if the demand exceeds the capability of the closest hydrants.

Take advantage of the equipment on apparatus already in the fire area instead of bringing in more apparatus. Connect extra lines to pumpers, which already have a good supply line instead of making "daisy chain" supply line connections.

Do not hook up to hydrants so close to the fire building that structural failure or fire extension will jeopardize the apparatus.

Fire hose soon limits the general access, as the fireground operation gets older. Command and Sectors must direct apparatus to important positions as early as possible. Lines should be laid with attention to the access problems they present. Try to lay lines on the same side of street as the hydrant and cross over near the fire.

When the aerial apparatus is not needed for upper level access or rescue, spot apparatus in a position that would provide an effective position for elevated stream operation if the fire goes to a defensive mode.

Ladder officers must consider extent and location of fire, most dangerous direction of spread, confinement, exposure conditions, overhead obstructions and structural conditions in spotting apparatus.

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The truck should be spotted where the aerial can be raised and used effectively without repositioning. It must also be spotted for effective use of hand ladders and allied forcible entry equipment.

Command vehicles should be positioned at a location that will allow maximum visibility of the fire building and surrounding area and the general effect of the companies operating on the fire.

Command vehicle position should be easy and logical to find and should not restrict the movement of other apparatus.

Rescue units should be spotted in a safe position that will provide the most effective treatment and transportation of fire victims and fire fighting personnel, while not blocking movement of other apparatus or interfering with fire fighting operations.

Staff vehicle placement should go to Level II staging unless that staff person has a pre-designated responsibility (i.e., Safety). The staging group officer will advise Command of staff personnel available for assignment.