
Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

Operations

Subject: High-rise Fires
Revised: 7-19-2017
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Approved: July 24, 2017
Section: 415.00

415.01 Purpose

To provide guidelines for the Ocean City Fire Department to operate at high-rise fires in a safe, efficient, and organized manner.

415.01 Policy

High-rise fire guidelines shall be followed on any structures that are seven (7) stories and above.

415.02 Procedure

There will be a response from the career division of 2 engines staffed with 3 each, 1 medic unit staffed with 3, and the shift supervisor if those units are available. The response from the volunteer division will be a full response from all stations. One provider from the medic unit will assume medical at the scene for our personnel as well as residents /occupants.

The first two units to arrive on the scene will combine to initiate the fire attack crew. The initial attack crew to enter the structure should be at least 4 firefighters.

If the first arriving engine officer feels the need to operate in a FAST ATTACK mode, the officer/crew leader will operate with his/her crew until additional resources arrive and he/she is relieved by a command officer. The first officer to arrive in a command vehicle will establish a fixed command and announce the location of the command post over the radio.

- A. Due to the critical need for manpower during the initial phase of a high-rise incident, if there is any fire or smoke showing from the exterior on arrival or if there is a confirmation of a working fire in the building, a second alarm and third alarm should be considered.
- B. The First arriving engine will establish a water supply to the sprinkler system/standpipe connection.
- C. Arriving Paramedic units will stage in an area so they will not be blocked in by fire ground operations and must be able to transport or leave the scene. This placement will not impede other arriving fire apparatus. One provider

Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

from the medic unit will assume the medical sector for the incident and wear the ICS “medical” vest. He or she will need to move the appropriate medical equipment closer to the scene.

- D. The crews must understand the floor and stair configuration when entering the building. There should be an attack stairwell designated and the location of the attack stairwell should be announced over the radio.
- E. Initial attack crews shall:
 - 1. Enter the lobby and obtain available information and relay same via a radio report. Obtain a Fire Service key to control the elevators. The stairwells should be used to access floors 7 and below and the building elevators can be used to access floors above 7 if operational and **only with fire service control.**
 - 2. Initial equipment deployed will consist of:
 - a. 4 - 2 ½” hose bundles
 - b. 1 – 1 ¾ hose roll
 - c. High-rise bag
 - d. Set of irons
 - e. Hydraulic forcible entry tool
 - f. Thermal imaging camera
 - g. Water can
 - 3. Activate the building fire alarm system if it has not already been activated.
 - 4. Locate the fire and relay information concerning location of the fire if know.
 - 5. Conduct an elevator safety check and report if elevators can be used with fire service control.
 - 6. Floor Configuration: Floor Layout is critical knowledge that will help fire attack units as they attempt to complete tactical assignments. It is a primary goal for the initial attack crew to determine the fire floor layout. This vital information can be obtained by use of a Pre-Fire Plan, floor surveys done during ascent (layout of floors below), or an assessment of the fire floor.
 - 7. Attempt to determine if a rescue operation is required.
 - 8. Evacuation Guidelines: Evacuation method for any occupant of a high-rise building should be limited to one or two stairways and unfortunately these are the routes the firefighters use to access the fire area. Occupants in the immediate area of the fire should be first rescue/evacuation priority. These individuals should quickly be removed, if appropriate, to at least three floors below the fire floor or to any other safe refuge area. Further evacuation should be determined by risk to the occupants and determined and coordinated by the fire command personnel based on reports from fire fighters in the fire area. If conditions warrant, occupants might have to be defended in place until such time that smoke/heat subside enough to safely remove them.

Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

9. Rescue evacuation order is:
 - a. Fire floor
 - b. Floor above the fire floor
 - c. Top floor
 - d. Remaining floors from the top floor in descending order

415.04 Command Structure

The initial staffing of the Command Post will be the first arriving officer in a command vehicle. The second arriving officer in a command vehicle will report to the command post to assist the IC as needed. The 1st arriving engine officer/crew leader may need to be IC until relieved via radio by the officer establishing a fixed command. The initial engine officer/crew leader/IC will operate in the FAST ATTACK mode and will remain with his/her crew.

- A. Command Post – A command post will be established at the scene of all high-rise fires. The location of this post will be determined by incident requirements, building configuration, etc. The lobby or Fire Control Center (FCC) can be utilized due to its central location within the building. An exterior command post is also acceptable as long as it is safe from falling debris (a minimum of 200 feet from the fire building). The fixed command post location will be announced by the IC over the radio.
 1. Typical information to be obtained at the Incident Command Post and available for the operating units should include:
 - a. Pre-Fire Plans
 - b. Building evacuation plans
 - c. Master Keys, window keys, elevator override keys, etc.
 - d. Names and phone numbers of building maintenance/supervisors on duty
 - e. Listing of any disabled persons in the building
 - f. Location of utilities, mechanical rooms, building fire suppression systems
 - g. Any noteworthy building information (occupancy, hazards, etc.)
 - h. The buildings engineer/superintendent should be available at the Command Post during the emergency
 2. Operations:
 - a. Operations post – generally one floor below the fire floor
 - b. Forward Staging – 2 floors below the fire floor (consideration should be given to sending the majority of responding units to this position)
 - c. Staging – manpower and equipment held outside the structure awaiting move up into Forward Staging. Base should be safe distance from the building at least 200' away.

Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

3. Safety:
 - a. Assign a Safety Officer and consider additional Safety Officers.
4. Logistics:
 - a. Generally located in the lobby or FCC
 - b. Elevator control and secure fire service keys
 - c. Controlling building systems (e.g. HVAC, smoke evacuation, emergency generator, etc.)
 - d. Water supply (standpipe) verification (e.g. fire pump activated, standpipe charged, system looped or not)
 - e. Access building public addressing systems, make announcements
 - f. I.D. fire attack and evacuation stairwell information provided by Command
 - g. Identify and track crews entering stairwells for assignment (Note: larger incidents will require an entire crew to assist)
5. Accountability
 - a. It may be beneficial for accountability to be set up in the lobby or at the location where firefighters are entering the building. It is important for the Accountability Officer to be in place early in the incident.

The Incident Commander must assume all command functions and duties until these assignments are appropriately filled.

415.05 Safety Concerns

- A. Established lobby control early in the fire to control elevators, utilities and running list of personnel in and out of the building.
- B. Area below fire (exterior) should be kept clear for safe distance in all directions due to the possibility of broken glass falling from above. During operations coverings (plywood, etc.) may be useful in protecting hose lines feeding FDC from falling debris.
- C. If elevators are judged safe to use, (members should take steps to assure that they do actually have control of the elevator, make several stops before desired floor – ensure control, look up elevator shaft for signs of smoke, etc.), proceed two floors below the fire and use stairwells the rest of the distance.
- D. Stairwells – Upon arrival of initial fire units, generally all stairwells will be utilized by the occupants exiting the building. The first priority for Command is to identify the attack and evacuation stairwells and smoke conditions in each. A primary objective of the first arriving companies is to maintain a smoke-free exit way for occupants. When firefighters open stairwell doors to start fire attack, smoke will enter the stairwell. Any occupants descending the stairway must be protected from smoke and heat as they descend. Firefighters must be notified when occupants are still exiting down a stairwell and fire

Ocean City Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

- attack is delayed. Stairwells should be identified as to their use (attack, evacuation) early on in the incident. (numbering or lettering stairways will provide incoming units with better direction, e.g. stairwell #1 is attack stairwell)
- E. Initial fire attack crew will need relief in twenty minutes or less (this includes the time it takes to ascend to the fire floor, 10 minute operating time). RELIEF CYCLE for extended fire operations:
 - 1. Use of three companies on each hand line placed in service
 - a. Crew #1 operating hose line- once crew is relieved returns to staging (rehab)
 - b. Crew #2 at stair shaft landing – awaiting to move up to hose line
 - c. Crew #3 at staging area – then moves up into stair shaft landing
 - F. Personnel will not enter the building without being assigned to do so.
 - G. General high-rise safety guidelines:
 - 1. Make sure doors don't lock behind you
 - 2. Monitor your air supply closely (time going in = time going out)
 - 3. If your assignment requires you to go into remote areas, above the fire floor, consider taking a spare SCBA cylinder.
 - 4. Maintain safe distance around outside of the high-rise structure (falling debris)

415.06 Communications

- A. Communications are usually poor in a steel frame building utilizing portable hand radios. Moving to an open window or roof will improve communications.
- B. It may be possible to utilize the building intercom or phone system.
- C. Command may consider the use of direct channels.

415.07 Operations

- A. Lobby Control – assign someone to control the lobby, all elevators will have to be cleared unless the car is being used for firefighter transport under fire service control.
- B. Forward operations post – One floor below the fire floor
- C. Operating Staging Area generally 2 floors below the fire floor
- D. Locate fire – announce location of the fire and the location of the attack stairwell for firefighting.
- E. Prepare for standpipe operation. Pump to both standpipe and sprinkler system. The standpipe and sprinkler system should be brought up to pressure slowly and the pressure should never exceed 200 psi.
- F. Standpipe connections will be made on the floor below the fire floor.
- G. If evacuation is necessary, you may be able to move the occupants to a safe area three floors below the fire, rather than evacuating everyone out by way of the lobby.

Ocean City Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines

- H. All ventilation methods should be evaluated in conjunction with the buildings automatic smoke management systems and smoke control systems. **Venting windows** during high-rise incidents can be **very dangerous operation** for both inside and outside crews, not to mention anyone in the path of falling glass. Another important factor to consider before venting windows would be that of wind speed and direction. Winds at upper floor levels may be significantly higher than that at the street level and how the venting from the lee or windward side will affect fire conditions is a critical factor when venting. Crews must inform Command of their intentions so the proper safety measures can be taken to protect those in harms way. Proper precautions on the fire floor must be also put in place so that ventilation doesn't adversely affect the fire. The venting of glass at any high-rise incident must be a coordinated assignment. **No windows shall be vented without the permission of Command.**
- I. Sustained operations will require units to move large amounts of equipment to the forward staging area 2 floors below the fire. Later arriving units will need to bring equipment to the forward staging area.

415.08 Apparatus Assignments

- A. The first 2 arriving staffed units will combine their manpower for the initial fire attack.
- B. The first arriving medic unit will assign at least 1 member of the crew as the Medical Branch.
- C. 1st arriving Chief/Command Unit – IC/Command
- D. 2nd arriving Chief/ Command Unit – assist the IC as needed/Accountability or ensure Accountability has been assigned.
- E. 3rd arriving Chief/Command Unit – Operations

415.09 Operational Priorities

- A. Establish a water supply
- B. Evacuation, fire attack, and search of fire unit and fire floor
- C. Establish a RIT one floor below the fire
- D. Search and evacuation one floor above the fire
- E. Back-up the fire attack
- F. Supplement RIT one floor below the fire
- G. Search and evacuation of the top floor
- H. Assign a Safety Officer