

Firehouse.com WEEKLY DRILL

DRILL #22: THE FIRE FORMULA

Introduction

Over the years we pick up a variety of information that, at times, seems trivial. For whatever reason we remember it and then one day we even use it. This happened to me with the FIRE formula. I don't remember where I got this information, but I do find myself using it.

Facts
Involvement
Risk
Effort

Facts

Facts are used to guide us in understanding just what we have so we can put an action plan into play. The list I have used over the years is not all inclusive and you should feel free to tweak them as you see fit. Here are a few facts:

1. Building construction type
 - Fire Resistive
 - Noncombustible
 - Heavy timber
 - Ordinary Construction
 - Wood Frame
2. Type of occupancy
 - Private dwelling
 - Multiple dwelling
 - School
 - Business
 - Factory
 - Shopping mall
3. Weather conditions
 - Humidity
 - Temperature
 - Wind
4. Time of day

Involvement

The amount of involvement will assist us in making our determination on the mode of attack to be used: offensive or defensive. It will also help determine the size hoseline needed and whether to start out right away using master streams.



1. Extent
 - How far has this fire traveled
 - What materials are involved
2. Conditions
 - What condition is the structure in
 - How fast is the fire moving
 - Where is the fire moving to in the structure
3. Critical exposures
 - Hazardous materials
 - High occupancy buildings

Risk

Risk is something that must be taken seriously. All personnel should be looking out for one another and all hazards need to be clearly communicated.

1. Hazards to occupants
2. Hazards to firefighters
3. Hazards to other emergency workers

Effort

Effort really looks at the energy and equipment that will be needed. It is vitally important that the needed resources are called for early to have the upper hand and we are not trying to play catch-up with the incident.

1. Adequate apparatus
 - Tower ladders and platforms
 - Foam units
 - Special teams
2. Adequate personnel
3. Right equipment for the job
4. Specialty resources

-- Prepared by Russell Merrick