

No. 1: Ground Ladders

Introduction

One of the most important tools used on any fireground are the portable ground ladders. They are found on most apparatus and vary in size, so it is important that firefighters train to enhance their skills for carrying, placing, and raising these portable ladders.

To prepare members for this training a review of your department's SOG's along with any additional reference manuals should be conducted. This is the time to answer any questions members might have and review the different components of the ladders.

All ladders should be checked for serviceability before the training; however all departments should have a regular maintenance schedule set aside for cleaning and checking this as well as after each use.

A suitable location for ladder drills needs to be obtained if you are not using a fire training facility.

Four General Operations for Portable Ladders

1. Rescue/entry/egress where the position of the tip of the ladder is at or just below the window sill. This allows for a large opening without the ladder hindering movement in or out of the window.

2. Fire streams where the tip of the ladder is above the window and the ladder is placed directly in front of the window opening. This allows the firefighter room to operate a hose line from the ladder.

3. Window ventilation where the tip of the ladder would be located on the windward side of the window at or just above the top of the window. This allows the firefighter to get above the window pane and letting the broken glass fall free of them and in addition allows the heat and smoke to blow away from them.

4. Roof operations where the tip of the ladder should extend five or more rungs above the roof line. This allows the ladder to be located more easily should smoke conditions on the roof change after ventilation has been performed.



Photo by Glen E. Ellman/FortWorthFire.com

What Should We be Looking for at this Training Evolution?

1. Was the proper size ladder used for the task?
2. Was the ladder controlled by the firefighters at all times during the evolution?
3. Was the ladder location and placement correct for the task?
4. Did the firefighters set the ladder with the correct climbing angle?

Safety Should be our Number One Priority

Things to keep an eye out for:

1. Overhead obstructions, especially electrical wires. Stay at least 10 feet away from these hazards.
2. When using extension ladders each firefighter should be checking the pawls (dogs) to insure that they are locked and functioning properly.
3. A firefighter should be footing the ladder.
4. Excessive rope from the halyard should be tied off properly.
5. Should any firefighter be working off a portable ground ladder, they should have a leg lock in place or be using a safety belt.

-Prepared by Russell Merrick/Firehouse.com

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