


SOG# 501-3	Standard Operating Guideline		
	<p style="text-align: center;">Cumberland Road Fire Department Inc.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Search & Rescue</p>	Approved By	
		Steven Parrish, Fire Chief	
		Effective Date	Revised Date
		8-17-1992	2-7-2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard is to provide guidance to incident commanders and search crews in fire ground search and rescue.

STANDARD

It shall be the standard to complete a primary search in all involved and exposed occupancies that can be entered. According to standard fire ground operations and basic firefighting tactics, performing a primary search is paramount.


Primary search is defined as the quick and systematic search of a building through all affected areas and verifying the removal and/or safety of all occupants. Time is the critical factor in the primary search process. Successful primary search operations must necessarily be extended quickly during the initial fire stages.

The rescue functions that follow lengthy fire control activities will be regarded tactically as a secondary search. A secondary search means a thorough search of the interior of the fire area after initial fire control and ventilation activities have been completed. Different companies should preferably complete secondary search than those involved in primary search activities. Thoroughness, rather than time, is the critical factor in secondary search.

The completion of the primary search is reported utilizing the standard radio reporting term 'ALL CLEAR'. It is the responsibility of the incident commander to coordinate primary search assignments, secure completion reports from the Search and Rescue Group or appropriate Division, and transmit the 'ALL CLEAR' report to the Incident Commander. Dispatch should record the time of this report from Command.

The stage of the fire becomes a critical factor that affects the rescue approach developed by the incident commander. The following items outline the basic approach to fire stages:

- • In nothing-showing situations or in very minor fire cases that pose no life hazard, the Fire Attack Group or Investigation Group must conduct a primary search while attempting to locate the fire or hazard inside the building.
- • In smoke-showing and fire-showing situations, fire control efforts must be extended simultaneously with rescue operations to gain entry and control interior

SOG# 501-3	Standard Operating Guideline		
	<p style="text-align: center;">Cumberland Road Fire Department Inc.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Search & Rescue</div>	Approved By	
		Steven Parrish, Fire Chief	
		Effective Date	Revised Date
		8-17-1992	2-7-2024

access to complete the primary search. Oftentimes, when limited resources are initially available, the most effective means to affect rescue will be fire containment and control. Exceptions to this operating assumption would be suspected viable victims in defined locations.

Command and operating companies cannot depend upon reports from spectators to determine the status of victims. Crews should utilize reports as to the location, number, and condition of victims as supporting primary search efforts and must extend and complete a primary search wherever entry is possible.

The incident commander must consider the following factors in developing a basic rescue size-up:

1. Number, location, and condition of victims.
2. Effect fire has on victims.
3. The capability of companies to enter buildings, remove/protect victims, and fire control.

The incident command must make the basic rescue decision:

Do we remove victims from the fire?


OR

Do we remove the fire from the victims?

In some cases, occupants are safer in their rooms than moving through contaminated hallways and interior areas. Such movement may also impede interior firefighting. The incident commander must realistically evaluate the manpower required to remove victims and then treat their fire-affected bodies. In cases involving such multiple victims, the incident Command must call for the timely response of adequate resources and quickly develop an organization that will both stabilize the fire and provide for the removal and treatment of the occupants.

Rescue efforts should be extended in the following order:

1. most severely threatened
2. the largest number (groups)

SOG# 501-3	Standard Operating Guideline		
	Cumberland Road Fire Department Inc. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Search & Rescue</div>	Approved By	
		Steven Parrish, Fire Chief	
		Effective Date	Revised Date
		8-17-1992	2-7-2024

3. the remainder of the fire area
4. the exposed areas

The incident commander must make specific primary search assignments to companies to cover specific areas of large, complex occupancies and maintain ongoing control of such companies until the entire area is searched.

When primary search companies encounter and remove victims, the incident commander must assign other companies to continue to cover the interior positions vacated by those companies.

All initial attack efforts must be directed toward supporting rescue efforts and hose lines must be placed in a manner to control interior access, confine the fire, and protect avenues of escape. Hose line placement becomes a critical factor in these cases and Command must realize that the operation is in a rescue mode. It may be necessary to operate in a manner that writes off the structure to buy rescue time. Normal means of interior access (stairs, hall, interior public areas, etc.) should be utilized to remove victims whenever possible. Secondary means of rescue (platforms, ladders, fire escapes, etc.) must be utilized in their order of effectiveness.


Vent – Enter – Isolate – Search Technique

In instances where traditional means of egress are blocked, search and rescue crews may use the Vent-Enter-Isolate-Search (VEIS) Technique. This can provide an alternate means to remove victims from an IDLH atmosphere. Companies using this technique would need to have information regarding the location of a potential victim and evaluate the quickest route to gain access (assuming that conventional access is not viable). Because VEIS is significantly different from normal search and rescue techniques, using it requires notification to the incident commander. In addition, companies should transmit the side and floor that VEIS will be utilized.

Once the VEIS technique is complete, the incident commander should be notified.

In addition to the information above, the following tactical considerations should be remembered when using VEIS:

- VES uses exterior windows, so crews should be extremely careful not to enter pre-flashover environments.

SOG# 501-3	Standard Operating Guideline			
	<p style="text-align: center;">Cumberland Road Fire Department Inc.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Search & Rescue</div>		Approved By	
			Steven Parrish, Fire Chief	
			Effective Date	Revised Date
			8-17-1992	2-7-2024

- Because access is more difficult through a window, multiple companies may have to assist in the VEIS events.
- VEIS is slower than traditional searches and is conducted during high-risk situations on a limited portion of an occupancy.
- Opening windows for VEIS will change fire behavior and crews should be aware of the rapidly changing fire environment.
- VEIS should only be used in areas that are believed to have victims and are under immediate threat.

The most important tactical consideration during the implementation of VEIS is controlling the door to the room and isolating the atmosphere being searched from the flow path of the fire. Failing to isolate the room can cause smoke, products of combustion, and heat to rapidly accumulate in the atmosphere thereby endangering occupants and firefighters.

RESPONSIBILITY

It shall be the responsibility of each member of the department and supervisors to ensure that the provisions of this standard are followed.