

**Travis County Emergency Services District No. 9**  
**Westlake Fire Department**  
**Standard Operating Guidelines**

**Subject: Fireground Responsibilities**

**Effective Date: June 15, 1997**

**Authorized By: Chief Paul Barker Revised Date: May 9, 2003**

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## **I. Purpose**

To clarify responsibilities for different types of apparatus and personnel at most fire incidents. There may be times when fire officers decide that deviation from these standard procedures is appropriate and justifiable.

## **II. Policy**

All personnel shall adhere to the following procedures to accomplish fireground operations in an effective and efficient manner. Personnel shall avoid committing themselves to "free lance" fireground operations and shall adhere to the following fireground priorities at all times:

1. **Safety of firefighters and other emergency responders**  
the safety of department personnel shall be the primary priority and concern of all personnel at all times. The only time life threatening operations will be acceptable is in direct support of life saving operations, and only then if the odds are in favor of success.
2. **Safety of civilians.**  
The safety and rescue of civilian personnel shall be of utmost importance, preceded in priority only by the safety of emergency service personnel. The only time rescue operations should be delayed for hose stream deployment and operation is for personnel protection and safety.
3. **Fire extension / loss stop**  
The primary objective after life safety is to stop the loss to structures and/or property. Fire loss evaluation should be from the outside in, limiting loss to regions, areas, structures, rooms, and initial locations in that order. Sacrifice of each level of fire involvement should be considered if there is risk of involvement to the next higher level.
4. **Fire suppression / additional loss prevention**  
Once knockdown has been achieved, consideration of property salvage values shall be the priority. Overhaul shall be effected in a manner that prevents any further or unnecessary loss or damage to property.

## **III. Procedure**

The following responsibilities should be observed unless the situation is driven by limitations such as the number of personnel and status of equipment.

## 1. **Engine Responses**

- On the fireground, the personnel responding on the engines will have the following responsibilities:
  - Search and Rescue
  - Evacuation
  - Forced Entry
  - Ventilation
  - Ladder the structure
  - Check for fire extension
  - Salvage
  - Overhaul
  - Security of the structure
- When responding to a confirmed working fire, it is the responsibility of the first-in engine to lay in from the nearest hydrant, stretch hose lines to provide water for rescue, to provide exposure protection, and to extinguish the fire. The second-in engine may establish the water supply if it can do so while the first-in engine proceeds directly to the scene and prepares for the attack. The first-in engine and the Officer-in-Charge should be extremely cautious in calling for the second-in engine to lay in. If the first-in engine commits to the fire and the second-in engine is delayed by traffic or an accident, then the first-in engine's mission will be compromised.
- When responding with a multi-engine response, but without a confirmed fire, the first-in engine will respond to the scene unless given other direction by the Officer in Charge. In this situation, the second-in engine shall stage in the direction of travel at a nearby hydrant and await instructions. While waiting, the hydrant should be flushed, and the threads checked as the company prepares to lay supply lines to the fire. The driver should report on the radio at which hydrant his/her engine is staged. All other engines and other fire apparatus dispatched on multi-engine Alarms will respond to a staging point designated by the IC, unless given other direction while responding.
- Second and later arriving engines and apparatus should only deploy supply lines or hose lines at the direction of the IC.
- If the utilities have not been cut off, the personnel on Rescue will cut them off, and report such action to the IC. When cutting off the utilities, the individual meters valves, or breakers will be marked by tying a piece of caution tape to the pipe, valve, or box door. The marking means that the utility has been shut off, and should not be turned back on unless ordered by the IC. Electrical meters shall not be pulled by WFD personnel to cut off power to a structure.

## 2. **Incident Commander**

The Incident Commander (IC) will assume command and initiate the command sequence. He/She will direct the placement and function of all units on the scene (pending the expansion of the ICS organizational structure), ensure that safe practices are used, and appoint a Safety Officer. The IC retains the responsibility for safe scene

practices and the safety of firefighters, but may appoint the highest ranking officer on scene as the safety officer to assist.

- The IC will establish a stationary command post and will conduct command operations from it.
- The Incident Commander should not assume command until satisfied that he/she has a firm grasp on the situation and a general idea of the layout of the fireground.
- Firefighter safety is a major responsibility of the IC. He/She should be able to recognize, and be alert for, impending conditions which lead to structural collapse, backdraft, or flashover.
- The IC should expand the incident's organization as needed with the ICS structure. Standard Operating Procedures which designate a particular organizational structure should be viewed as a guideline, and subject to change at the IC's discretion.

### **3 Mutual Aid Response Guidelines**

To respond safely and efficiently to mutual aid or automatic aid request and to control the number of personnel responding and the number of vehicles responding into the requesting service area;

- All volunteers will respond to station 2 prior to responding to a Mutual Aid / Automatic Aid call. If the member is closer to the call from their location, they may contact station 2 by telephone ( preferred) or by radio and request permission to respond directly to the call.
- The Shift Commander will send apparatus and personnel as available.
- Automatic Aid responses to Ce-Bar will be from station 2 with appropriate apparatus and personnel.