

**Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association**  
**FIRE OPERATION MANUAL**  
Section 15

## **High Rise Firefighting Guidelines**

### **GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURE:**

Definition: Although various definitions have been offered by many different sources, the one which is most widely accepted defines a “high-rise building” as being seventy-five feet in height and designed for human occupancy. Priority of assigning resources may vary depending upon the needs of the incident.

#### **1. Immediate Priorities**

The construction of most high-rise buildings effectively shields the interior from the outside. **Even with “nothing showing”, an assumption of a concealed fire should be made by the Incident Commander.**

The initial arriving units should be concerned with:

- Identifying the fire floor
- Providing an attack on the fire floor
- Providing for the life safety of persons in immediate danger
- Providing water supply for the initial attack
- Establishing lobby control
- Determining ventilation needs on the fire floor and on the floor above the fire

#### **2. Life Safety Considerations**

The life safety aspects of a fire in a high-rise structure must include an evaluation of the conditions in each area of the structure and the tenability or need for evacuation. Large numbers of occupants may be involved in these decisions.

The Incident Commander must direct the decision to remove occupants, when necessary, and the plan for evacuating or relocating occupants must be coordinated with the fire control strategy.

#### **3. Initial Attack**

The initial attack should consist of at least two companies. The officer leading the attack will be responsible for checking the annunciator panel for verification, additional information, and for selecting the method of ascent to the reported fire area.

As soon as the fire floor is reached and identified, the officer will give the Incident Commander a report of conditions and immediate need requirements. The Incident Commander should then establish the fire floor as a division (Floor 6= Division). All other companies working on the fire floor or under a division or group supervisor will be identified by their unit number.

When a building has multiple standpipes, the fire floor Division Supervisor must advise the Incident Commander where water is needed and the Incident Commander will confirm the availability of pumped water to that particular riser.

Initial attack companies will go upstairs with a minimum of SCBAs, hose packs, and basic forcible entry tools.

#### **4. Water Supply**

Supplying water to the building standpipe system will be the responsibility of the Engineer of the second arriving engine company. In the event that the building has multiple standpipes, other incoming companies will be assigned additional water supply responsibility. Once the water supply has been secured the officer and firefighter will assist with fire attack or establish two-out. Two-out will be located between staging and the fire floor.

#### **5. Lobby Control**

Lobby control will be established by the third arriving engine company. The responsibility of Lobby Control is to account for all fire personnel and their assignments, elevator use, stairwell access, lobby security, and the air handling and smoke exhaust systems.

#### **6. Staging**

Staging will be established by the fourth arriving engine company. The staging area should be located two floors below the fire floor (or in another safe environment) with convenient access to fire operations.

Staging will act as a resource area for supply of equipment and personnel to provide direct support to fire fighting operations. All spare SCBA bottles, hose, nozzles, and other equipment will be stockpiled in this location.

Staging will also act as a rehab area for exhausted crews. Medical equipment, drinking water, and food supplies shall be provided to this location.

#### **7. Base**

Base will be established by the Fifth arriving engine company. Base should be located at least 200 feet from the building, preferably in an open area, suitable for the storage and movement of apparatus and equipment.

Base location is identified by using a geographical identifier (usually the same identifier as the incident). The Incident Commander shall advise County Communications of the Thomas Brothers Map coordinates for Base location.

#### **8. Command Priorities**

Once the initial companies have begun operations, the Incident Commander must be concerned with the following:

Provide a continuous water supply for the attack. Assign an appropriate number of engine companies to provide water to standpipes. When there are multiple separate systems, pump to all standpipe inlets to insure a water supply to all standpipes in the building. Establish a rapid intervention crew (RIC) for the rescue of members operating at the scene if the need arises.

Assign a company to check the floor above the fire floor. The Incident Commander must get a report on conditions above the fire as quickly as possible, indicating possible fire extension, smoke conditions, and need for evacuation.

Call for additional resources as soon as the need is identified. Any type of working fire will quickly utilize initial arriving fire companies. A request for five engines and two (overhead) chief officers should be requested upon confirmation of fire in the building. An additional ten engines and three chief officers or (overhead) additional should be requested

for a working fire. A total of fifteen engines and three chief officers should be requested for a working fire.

Begin to establish additional support systems. A fire which is not controlled by the initial attack companies and requiring more resources will need additional support in the form of staging, rehab, increased lobby control, stairwell support, base, and an expansion of the Incident Command System.

Establish ventilation groups. Provide positive pressure ventilation to the attack stairwell as soon as possible. Additional stairwells may also require positive pressure ventilation.

## **ENGINE COMPANY OPERATIONS**

### **1. First Arriving Company - Fire Attack**

❖ Strip the following equipment from the apparatus:

- Breathing apparatus
- Forcible entry tools
- High-rise hose packs (2) and gated wye
- Portable radio
- Tools for propping doors open
- TIC
- Cell phone
- Ceiling puller
- Key for Knox Box

Make entry to the building and proceed to the fire control room.

Obtain the information on the nature of the emergency from the reporting source.

Prior to leaving the lobby for fire attack operations, the officer leading the attack shall insure the following has occurred:

- Determined what is annunciated on the alarm panel
- Obtained appropriate keys
- All elevators are down and locked out-of-service
- HVAC system is shut off
- Phone cabinet is unlocked and fire phone is obtained
- Provided an initial report of conditions

If a fire is confirmed, pass command (if it has not already been assumed by the Duty Chief Officer) and commence fire and rescue operations.

Upon confirmation of a fire, the Incident Commander should request five engines and two chief officers.

Proceed, via a safe route, to the fire floor.

The Fire Attack Officer shall provide a short report of conditions from their position as they reach each floor (3rd floor clear, 4th floor, light smoke, etc.).

Elevators shall not be used as a means of reaching floors within the building under investigation for a fire emergency.

The Fire Attack Officer shall evaluate the area two floors below the reported fire floor for its use as a staging area and communicate this to the Incident Commander.

The attack team shall locate the fire, check for vertical extension, and give the following size-up:

- What is burning
- Are occupants endangered
- Immediate resource needs
- Check floors while en route to fire floor
- Best route for resources to staging
- Check the floor above the fire floor

Initiate fire suppression and rescue operations

Upon confirmation of a working fire, the Incident Commander shall request ten additional engines and three chief officers.

## **2. Second Arriving Engine Company – Water Supply/Fire Attack Support**

- Establish a continuous water supply
- Complete water supply hook-up to appropriate standpipe(s)
- Establish two/out if needed two floor below the fire floor.

Note! Once water supply hook-ups are made, personnel not needed to support that task are to contact the IC for another assignment; fire attack, or two/out.

❖ Strip the following equipment from the apparatus:

- Breathing apparatus
- Forcible entry tools
- High-rise hose packs (2) and gated wye
- Portable radio
- Tools for propping doors open
- Cell phone
- RIC bag if establishing two/out

- Proceed, via safe route, to fire floor to assist in fire suppression and rescue operations.

## **3. Third arriving engine company – Lobby Control**

❖ Strip the following equipment from the apparatus:

- Breathing apparatus
- High-rise hose packs (2) and gated wyes
- Portable radio (one for each company member if possible)
- Extra air bottles
- Key for the Knox Box
- LOBBY CONTROL high-rise kit provided by requesting agency

- Proceed to lobby area or point of entry to building if no lobby exists.

- Obtain fire alarm information from annunciator panel or fire control room  
Obtain elevator/stairwell keys from Knox Box  
Establish check-in/check-out station
- Log time-in, assignment/location, time-out

Take control of elevators

- Call all elevators to lobby and lock them out-of-service
- Do not allow elevator use until it is declared safe to use them by either the IC or Operations.

Note! Fire service personnel using elevators shall be equipped with the following:

- Breathing apparatus
- Fire extinguisher
- Portable radio
- Forcible entry tools
- Elevator control key

Manage stairwell access

- Locate ground floor stairwell openings
- Verify from Fire Attack the safest stairwell for ascent to the staging area
- Control entry and exit of fire personnel and civilians
- Provide the following information to personnel entering the building:

- 1) Reported location of the fire
- 2) Status of elevators
- 3) Specific route to staging, including stairwell
- 4) Additional important information

- Control HVAC and smoke exhaust systems
  - Shut down HVAC~ system (if not already done.)
  - Make sure smoke exhaust system is in the “on~ position
- Make contact with the Building Manager/Engineer

#### **4. Fourth arriving engine company - Staging**

❖ Strip the following equipment from the apparatus:

- Breathing apparatus
- Forcible entry tools
- Portable radio
- Extra air bottles
- First-aid kit
- STAGING high-rise kit provided by requesting agency

Determine location for setting up STAGING from Operations or the IC.

- Two floors below the fire unless unsuitable
- In a large room or area next to the stairwell
- Divide and label the following areas:
  - 1) Reserve personnel
  - 2) Rehabilitation
  - 3) Reserve equipment

- 4) Full air bottles
- 5) Empty air bottles

Contact Operations or the IC to determine the resource levels to be maintained in the STAGING area.

Use elevators only when they are determined safe by Operations of the IC.

Maintain a record of companies and equipment in STAGING and assigned or released from STAGING.

- Check-in procedure for companies arriving in STAGING:
  - 1) Check-in time
  - 2) Company number and agency
  - 3) Officer in charge
  - 4) Number of company members
  - 5) Equipment brought to STAGING
- Check-out procedure for companies assigned or released from STAGING are:
  - 1) Check-out time
  - 2) Company number and agency
  - 3) Officer in charge
  - 4) Number of company members
  - 5) Division or group assignment/or released
  - 6) Equipment taken out of STAGING

## **5. Fifth arriving engine company – Base**

- Contact IC to verify location of BASE
  - Use a geographic identifier (usually the same as the incident identifier)
  - Locate at least 200 feet from the building
  - Make sure base location does not interfere with command post operations
- Advise County Communications of the location of BASE so incoming equipment can report directly to this location.
- Establish a security perimeter around BASE area
  - Coordinate with police department to assist with security, blocking of streets, and for movement of resources from BASE to LOBBY
- Establish a check-in/check-out procedure for arriving resources:
  - Base arrival time
  - Company number and agency
  - Officer in charge
  - Number of company members
  - Type of equipment
  - Assignment given when leaving BASE
- Park apparatus in an orderly fashion and keep crews together to facilitate response
- Advise the Incident Commander when apparatus is in BASE and ready for assignment (only the IC can call for more resources)
- Coordinate the smooth flow of personnel and equipment from BASE to LOBBY
- Establish an equipment pool and locate in a secure area

- Consider a traffic flow that will facilitate unloading of equipment and transportation to LOBBY
- BASE high-rise kit provided by requesting agency

## **COMMAND POSITIONS:**

### **1. Incident Commander**

Responsible for management of all incident operations. Plans and directs the overall strategy for control of the incident and establishes the organizational elements necessary to deal with the incident.

### **2. Operations Chief**

Manages all suppression and rescue operations. Reports to and consults with the IC regarding the overall strategy and tactics to be employed. Assigns and supervises Fire Attack, Staging, and Division and Group Supervisors. Normally operates from a location above ground in proximity to the fire suppression activities.

### **3. Plans Chief**

Assists the IC in planning overall strategy for containment of the incident. Supervises and coordinates the activities of Situation Status (SITSTAT) and Resource Status (RESTAT).

### **4. Logistics Chief**

Supervises and coordinates the activities of Lobby Control, Base, Stairwell Support, Water Supply, Communications, and the Medical Unit. The location of the Logistics Chief will vary depending on which element of this command requires attention.

### **5. Safety Officer**

The safety officer identifies hazardous situations, advises the Incident commander in matters affecting personnel safety and investigates accidents that occur during the incident.

### **6. Information Officer**

The information officer provides liaison between the media and the Incident Commander, consults with the command staff regarding any constraints on the release of information and prepares press briefings.