

# NORTH WHATCOM FIRE AND RESCUE

## FIRE DISTRICT POLICY

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**Number:** 0900.0302.00

**Date:** 10/21/10

**Area:** Emergency Readiness and Response

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**Subject:** Residential Structural Fire Operations

**Approved:**

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### 1.0 General

Residential Structure fires are the more common fire response for North Whatcom Fire and Rescue. As such it is critical that all fire district emergency response personnel have a complete understanding as to what apparatus, personnel and equipment will be responding and what will be expected during residential fire operations.

### 2.0 Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy and procedure to identify the proper apparatus and staffing requirement for a residential structure fire and to establish safe operating procedures to support effective residential structure firefighting operations.

### 3.0 Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all members who may be responding to, participating in, or otherwise involved in combating a residential structure fire.

### 4.0 Policy

#### 4.1 **Definitions:**

*Residence* – a shelter or building that is a dwelling or place for habitation by human beings. The term includes many kinds of dwellings ranging from rudimentary huts of nomadic tribes to high-rise apartments buildings.

*Single Family Residence* – normally, a free standing structure constructed on lots or acreage larger than the structure, where that portion of the lot or acreage is considered “yard”. Normally, the members of the residence are of a single family, however a single party of people may also occupy the single family residence.

*Multi-Family Residence* – normally a structure where several single families or single parties reside in the same structure; commonly called condominiums, apartments, and town homes/terrace houses.

*Rural Areas* – areas within the district’s jurisdiction where population is less than five-hundred per square mile, and water supplies and other infrastructure supporting fire operations are limited, such as found in agricultural areas.

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*Urban Areas* – those area within the district’s jurisdiction where population is one-thousand or greater per square mile, and water supplies are normally made through connecting to fire hydrants, and other infrastructure for supporting fire ground operations are sufficient, such as in a city.

**4.2 Policy Statement – North Whatcom Fire and Rescue shall respond appropriate resources to all confirmed residential structure fire.**

4.2.1 At a minimum the appropriate resources for a confirmed single family residential structure fire where the structure is located in rural areas, shall be:

- Two Class A rated fire engines staffed with a minimum of two Firefighter I certified firefighters.

*Note:* The fire district shall make every attempt to ensure that first out apparatus responding to any structure fire are staffed with three Firefighter I certified firefighters.

- Two rated tenders
- One transport capable ambulance
- One command officer (duty officer)

4.2.2 At a minimum, the appropriate resources for a confirmed single family residential structure fire where the structure is located in an urban area supplied by a municipal water system where fire hydrants are available, shall be:

- Three Class A rated fire engines staffed with a minimum of two Firefighter I certified Firefighters.
- One Class Rated Quint type Ladder truck may be substituted for one
- One transport capable ambulance.
- One command officer (duty officer)

*Note:* The fire district shall make every attempt to ensure that first out apparatus responding to any structure fire are staffed with three Firefighter I certified firefighters.

4.2.3 The district duty officer once enroute and in communications with dispatch, shall determine the need for additional resources based on obtained information, shall identify from where those resources should be sent, and shall request these resources through dispatch.

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4.2.4 In the absence of a responding Duty Officer, the first arriving fire officers shall assume these duties and responsibilities.

4.2.5 Residential Structure fire resources shall be adjusted as soon as information identifies the need for increasing or reducing apparatus and staffing needs.

**4.3 Policy Statement – The first on scene arriving officer of a confirmed residential structure fire shall ensure the following tasks are completed:**

4.3.1 Incident Priorities based on scene conditions, taking into consideration the safety of response personnel, property owners, and other adjacent inhabitants and structures are identified.

4.3.2 An initial “size-up” of the observed situation and fire conditions and reported in accordance with the procedures outlined under Section 5.1.1 of this policy.

4.3.3 When two apparatus arrive at the scene of a residential structure fire simultaneously, the officers shall immediately coordinate with each other as to:

- Who will report the initial scene size-up to dispatch,
- Who shall complete the 360°
- Who shall initiate initial assignments based on agreed tactic.
- Who will establish command

4.3.4 An initial “incident action plan” based on information gained from a 360° walk around the structure that identifies:

- Safety concerns for firefighter personnel (electrical wires down, basements etc.)
- Verified or possible victims
- Exposures
- Observed fire conditions
- Type of construction
- Other conditions and/or situations that may require immediate attention and/or intervention

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4.3.5 The “initial action plan ”when being developed and implemented shall include an analysis of:

- Existing resources at hand
- Expected resources within first ten minutes
- Immediately available water supply

#### **4.4 Policy Statement – Use of Compressed Air Foam for Residential Structure Fires:**

4.4.1 Unless otherwise indicated, as defined in Policy 0900.0308.00 (Compressed Air Foam Systems Operations), compressed air foam will be the default evolution for residential structure fires.

4.4.2 For the purpose of RIT intervention during a firefighter rescue, hand lines being extended by RIT personnel shall be straight water only and not CAFS. This will provide the maximum protection for both the firefighter in trouble and the RIT members.

### **5.0 Procedure**

#### **5.1 Arrival and Size-up**

5.1.1 The first arriving fire officer will perform a size-up upon arrival and communicate the following information:

- Type of occupancy.
- Type of construction
- Specific conditions e.g., smoke, fire, victims, and location of each
- Command status – I.E.A.T.
  - I – Initiating
  - E – Establish
  - A – Assume
  - T - Terminating
- Initial mode – T.R.I.P.O.D.
  - T – Transitional
  - R – Rescue
  - I – Investigate
  - P – Preparing
  - O – Offensive
  - D – Defensive

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- Communicate what you are doing
- Assign tasks to incoming apparatus
- Order additional apparatus or alarms as needed
- Order utilities as needed – i.e.: Electric company, natural gas,
- Traffic control

### 5.2 First-in Engine Company Functions

- 5.2.1 Complete a size up, 360° walk around.
- 5.2.2 Identify immediate priorities and initial fire tactic(s) based on fire situation.
- 5.2.3 Establish a consistent water supply from hydrant or tenders
- 5.2.4 Extend appropriate hand lines and set pump pressure for appropriate evolution and to meet required fire flow
- Note: Unless otherwise indicated, Compressed Air Foam will be used on all residential structure fires, and pump panel will be set accordingly.*
- 5.2.5 Before beginning interior structural firefighting operations, the first arriving fire officer and incident commander shall ensure that the requirements of WAC 296-305-05001; paragraphs (10 and (11) have been satisfied.
- 5.2.6 Fire suppression personnel shall not enter the structure until the required number of fire suppression personnel are on scene, unless there is an imminent life threat to persons trapped in side.
- 5.2.7 A “Transitional Attack” using CAFS should be considered as the evolution of choice until sufficient personnel are on scene to implement an offensive interior attack.
- 5.2.8 Ventilation if needed
- 5.2.9 Fire suppression activities

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### 5.3 Second-in Engine Company Function

5.3.1 Support the first arriving engine company. This may include but not be limited to:

- Establishing water supply
- Conducting a primary search
- Serving as a Stand-By Team
- Serving as a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)
- Conducting ventilation
- Conducting primary salvage
- Serving in command functions

5.3.2 Ensure a Stand-By Team is in place in accordance with WAC 296-305-05001

5.3.3 Secondary attack line established from an independent engine.

### 5.4 Tactical Priorities – Primary

Objective	Benchmark Communicated
Rescue	Primary search complete
Fire Control	Under control
Loss Control	Loss stopped

### 5.5 Tactical Priorities #1 – Rescue

5.5.1 The following circumstances/conditions shall be considered when evaluating and initiating a rescue or potential effort.

5.5.2

- The number, location and condition of victims
- The effect the fire has on a victim
- The capability of the available resources to enter the building, remove and protect victims and control the fire.

5.5.3 Conduct a primary search of the structure to ensure all occupants are out of the structure. If victims are found:

- Announce over the radio that victim(s) have been found, identify your point of egress, and request medical aid if appropriate.
- Remove the victims from the structure using the nearest means of egress.

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- Ensure victims are being treated prior to re-entering the structure

5.5.4 Upon completion of the Primary Search and there is assurance that there are no obvious signs of individuals inside the structure, transmit to command, “Primary Search Complete Nothing Found.”

5.5.5 Initiate a “Secondary Search” when fire conditions, structure integrity, and adequate staffing are confirmed. If victims are found:

- Announce over the radio that victim(s) have been found, identify your point of egress, and request medical aid if appropriate.
- Remove the victims from the structure using the nearest means of egress
- Ensure victims are being treated prior to re-entering the structure.

5.5.6 Upon completion of the Secondary Search and there is assurance that there are no individuals inside the structure transmit to command “Secondary Search Complete Nothing Found.”

### **5.6 Tactical Priorities #2 – Fire Control**

5.6.1 Stabilize fire conditions whenever possible through the use of a well-placed, interior fire attack. This should be supported with resources and actions required to reduce fire extension and to bring the fire under control.

5.6.2 A critical Command decision, both initial and on-going, relates to Modes of Operation (T. R. I. P. O. D.)

- T – Transitional – fire venting horizontally, unknown if occupied, Stand-By Team not available (2 out) defensive to offensive operations.
- R – Rescue – Immediate with compelling evidence of civilian life safety problem.
- I – Investigating – Fire officer needs to acquire additional information in order to make informed decisions and appropriate assignments.

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- P – Preparing – fire is NOT venting horizontally. Fire growth will be limited by controlling air supply (“dampers closed”) until a Stand-By Team is deployed. Once Stand-by Team is deployed, the operation will transition to offensive.
- O – Offensive – There is life/property to protect/conserv. Strategic priority life safety will be addressed with the tactical objective primary search. There is at least four (4) personnel on scene (2-in/2-out).
- D – Defensive: There is not life/property to save/protect. Will risk nothing to protect what cannot be protected and risk nothing to save what cannot be saved.

- 5.6.3 Command will communicate the mode of operations to all personnel on the fire ground, and during the acknowledgment and announcement of the 10-minute benchmark time from Dispatch.
- 5.6.4 Command should consider the most probable direction of fire extension, particularly as it affects rescue, confinement and exposure protection, and allocate resources based upon this evaluation.
- 5.6.5 Initial attack efforts should be directed towards supporting the primary search.
- 5.6.6 Should fire conditions allow for property conservation, Command shall assign resources to the task of salvage as soon as possible.
- 5.6.7 If the structure is deemed lost, or the fire is beyond the control of the immediately available resources, protect exposures and routes of egress before directly attacking the fire.
- 5.6.8 Anytime the Command changes the mode of operation it -shall be communicated to all personnel on-scene using normal routes of communication established for the scene.
- 5.6.9 If the order for withdrawal or abandonment has been given, Command will account for the safety of all personnel by conducting a Personnel Accountability report (PAR)

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5.6.10 The completion of bringing the fire under control is reported utilizing the standard radio reporting term “fire is under control”.

### **5.7 Tactical Priorities – Loss Control**

5.7.1 During initial fire attack operations, and if sufficient personnel are available, “primary salvage” should be initiated to minimize property loss.

5.7.2 When basic fire control has been achieved, Command should direct companies into “stop loss” activities:

5.7.3 Evaluate damage to the structure with focus on the overall fire area to ensure:

- Structural integrity (is the structure structurally safe?)
- An IDLH atmosphere no longer exists
- Other hazards are identified

5.7.4 Evaluate the salvage of various areas.

5.7.5 Evaluate the personnel and equipment that will be required.

5.7.6 Commit the required companies to salvage functions.

5.7.7 Reduce hose lines from the fire control functions to salvage functions.

5.7.8 The provision of salvage function must be coordinated with Fire Investigation. It may be necessary to control spot fires until the investigation have had an opportunity to do their work before digging out and completely extinguishing non-threatening fires.

### **5.8 Termination of Incident**

5.8.1 Clear the structure of any additional hot spot or spot fires, using Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) during overhaul phase.

5.8.2 Coordinate with command for obtaining home owner’s “essential items” from structure if possible. Such items could include:

- Critical medications
- Eyeglasses

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- Important papers
- Certain valuables
- Other items deemed critical by home owner

- 5.8.3 Secure structure to the elements or to illegal entry.
- 5.8.4 Secure and re-service all non-committed apparatus on scene.
- 5.8.5 Release all non-committed apparatus.
- 5.8.6 Obtain information from the occupant or owner.
- 5.8.7 Turn scene over to the owner or occupant.
- 5.8.8 Re-service all apparatus, equipment and P.P.E.
- 5.8.9 Terminate incident with Prospect.

### **6.0 Control Mechanisms**

#### **6.1 Policy Statement – Responsibility of Fire Chief**

- 6.1.1 The Fire Chief shall ensure this policy is reviewed at a minimum annually and shall implement corrections and/or changes as necessary.
- 6.1.2 The Fire Chief shall ensure that all fire ground personnel are fully aware of the contents of this policy.

#### **6.2 Policy Statement – Responsibility of Assistant Chief/Operations**

- 6.2.1 The Assistant Chief/Operations shall ensure the contents of this policy meet the operational requirements for fire district residential structure fire operations.
- 6.2.2 The Assistant Chief/Operations shall ensure all fire ground personnel operate at the scene of a residential structure fire in accordance with the policies and procedures identified herein.

#### **6.3 Policy Statement – Responsibility of Division Chief/Training**

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- 6.3.1 The Division Chief/Training shall ensure that all appropriate fire ground personnel are informed of, and trained to the standards required by this policy.
- 6.3.2 The Division Chief/Training shall ensure that all fire ground personnel are completely informed as to the content of this policy, the requirements, and the operating practices identified herein.
- 6.3.3 The Division Chief/Training shall ensure that all fire ground personnel receive annual re-current training on this policy, the requirements and operating procedures identified herein.
- 6.3.4 The Division Chief/Training shall ensure appropriate documentation is recorded indicating that all fire ground personnel have received initial and recurrent training on the contents of this policy.

### 7.0 References

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Board Chair, Board of Fire Commissioners  
North Whatcom Fire and Rescue

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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