REGIONAL STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Truck Company Operations

#: 103.11 REV: 10/2015

SCOPE:

This procedure applies to all personnel operating as part of a Truck/Ladder Company in the greater Sierra Vista area and provides a framework for the functions and procedures of a Truck Company at a structure fire. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) does not address other ancillary functions of a Truck Company such as vehicle extrication, technical rescue, hazmat response, etc.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this SOP is to provide Truck Company personnel with the primary objectives they are to accomplish on the fire scene and a framework and procedure for completing those objectives.

SAFETY:

Truck Company operations can be very dangerous. The skills of a Truck Company are numerous and diverse. It is an arduous task for an individual to stay up-to-date on all the latest teachings and philosophies related to vehicle extrication, hazardous materials response, technical/swift water rescue, EMS, and structural firefighting. As such, Truck Company personnel must be committed to performing in all these realms in an excellent and safe manner. Training often and in a realistic and relevant way is crucial to company success.

Some of the tasks outlined in this SOP are classic “high risk, low frequency” events that are extremely dangerous but may have enormous life-safety rewards. It is imperative that Incident Commander utilizes the strategic decision-making model to include performing a risk analysis, and that he or she communicates his or her Incident Action Plan (IAP) to those operating on the fireground.

PROCEDURE:

P.1 Truck Company Philosophy

Area Truck Companies will operate with the philosophy that a quick fire attack, and supporting the actions thereof, will provide the best possibility for victim removal and scene stabilization. This requires effective on-scene coordination and communication between the Truck Company and Engine Companies.

P.2 Apparatus Placement

The general consideration on apparatus placement is always to spot the apparatus strategically, given the location, type of emergency, type of occupancy, other apparatus locations, etc. This does not change with aerial apparatus placement, however some specifics the Engineer and Captain should keep in mind when spotting the Truck are:

- At fires in single-family residential occupancies the first-due Truck shall, when possible, spot toward the front of the building to with the goal of maximizing aerial access to the roof. The Driver and Officer should keep in mind any deterrents to roof access when arriving on scene, including set-back, overhead lines, trees, carports, etc. The Truck should be spotted in a more effective location if such deterrents exist.

- The Truck shall favor the corner of large commercial and/or multi-floor occupancies where staying out of the collapse zone and still being close enough for effective action is not possible.

- On strip malls it may be advantageous to spot on the back (typically Charlie) side of the structure as this will often times provide access to additional entry/egress points that the units on the front of the building can't quickly/easily access, utilities are typically located there, and (providing overhead power lines aren't a precluding factor) roof access with the aerial device is typically better because the front/Alpha side of these occupancies often has a parapet.

P.3 Tactical Priorities

Tactical Priorities for the Truck Company at a structure fire will be:

1. Search and Rescue
2. Coordinated forcible entry in support of fire attack
3. Proactive placement of ground ladders for access/egress
4. Coordinated Ventilation (considering flow paths)
5. Utility Control
6. Salvage
7. Overhaul
8. Elevated Master Streams

Area Truck Companies shall deploy a two-man, two-team approach when operating on the fireground. The Engineer and Left Seat Firefighter will make up the Outside Team (Ex. Radio Designation = Tower 363-Oscar) while the Officer and the Right Seat Firefighter will make up the Inside Team (Ex. Radio Designation = Tower 363).

Radio designation will default to the unit name and number (i.e. Truck 1320) as long as the company is operating as one team, and/or if the unit is only staffed with three personnel. However, if the company is split into two, two-man teams, then the designation "Oscar" will automatically be assigned to the Outside Team and the Inside Team (Captains side) will retain their original designation.

P.3.A Outside Team (Oscar)

During working structure fires, the Outside Team will mainly be committed to operations on the outside of the structure. According to the Incident Action Plan (IAP), this may include:

1. Vent-Isolate-Search (VIS)
    a. On residential occupancies the team shall perform a 360° walk-around of the building and should identify and assess windows that present a tenable environment (mainly bedrooms and bathrooms) on the inside for victims. If the team decides to take the window, the Officer should inform the IC of this action and location (Ex. "Command, this is Truck 1320 Oscar, we'll be performing VIS at the Bravo-side window"). **The first task to be taken upon making entry through the window is to isolate the room by rapidly moving to the interior door and closing it.** If during the subsequent search a victim is found, the information should immediately be relayed to the IC by the Officer, and additional resources should be requested to the site to assist in victim removal. The Outside Team should assess/take windows closest to the hazard and work away, switching roles with each evolution.
2. Utility Control
    a. The team shall control utilities during their 360° walk-around and relay this benchmark to the IC.
3. Proactive ground ladder/aerial ladder placement at upper floor windows
    a. Should time allow and no immediate need for VIS or Ventilation is needed, and should there be firefighting crews still operating inside the structure, the Outside Team should begin proactively placing aerial and/or ground ladders at upper floor windows in the case of a firefighter emergency.
4. Proactive ground ladder placement for 1 or 2 story residential/commercial
    a. Should time allow and no immediate need for VIS or Ventilation is needed, and should there be firefighting crews still operating inside the structure, the Outside Team should begin proactively placing ground ladders for primary and/or secondary access/egress to the roof should vertical ventilation later become necessary.

5. Upper floor aerial rescue
    a. If the Inside Team is unavailable due to performing other fireground tasks/assignments, the Outside Team will be responsible for upper floor rescue of civilians or firefighters in distress using the aerial device or ground ladders.
6. Horizontal Ventilation as ordered by the IC
    a. The Outside Team will be responsible for Horizontal Ventilation should the IC order it.
7. Vertical Ventilation as ordered by the IC
    a. On residential and smaller commercial, and if the Inside Team is unavailable due to performing other fireground tasks/assignments, the Outside Team will be responsible for Vertical Ventilation should the IC order it.
8. Elevated Master Streams as ordered by the IC
    a. If the Inside Team is unavailable due to performing other fireground tasks/assignments, the Outside Team will be responsible for deploying, supplying, and flowing the elevated master stream.

P.3.B Inside Team

During working structure fires, the Inside Team will be committed to operations on the inside of the structure. This includes:

1. Forcible Entry
    a. As needed, the Inside Team will coordinate to perform forcible entry for the company or Group performing fire attack. Forcible entry should be done wherever the company or Group performing fire attack deems is the best entry point to attack the fire *or* whichever entrance they have already stretched their attack line to. The Inside Team must be diligent in controlling the flow path when forcing entry. Keeping the door open while waiting for the Fire Attack Group to make entry into the door will only draw more air into the structure and increase the fire.

2. Search and Rescue
    a. Once coordinated forcible entry in support of fire attack is achieved, the Inside Team Officer shall make the determination how best to perform the interior search to achieve a Primary All Clear. Many times, this is most easily performed attached to the company performing fire attack while occasionally searching off the hoseline in adjacent areas/rooms.
    b. However, should the company or Group performing fire attack encounter a large body of fire somewhere that impedes the Inside Team from progressing on their Primary Search objective, the Inside Team Officer may find an alternate route into the structure to search those tenable areas that are not already being searched by the Outside Team via VIS operations. The Inside Team may opt to enter the structure via another route opposite the company or Group performing fire attack if they believe that an immediate search in a particular area of the building is warranted. The Inside Team should **KEEP IN**

MIND that introducing a new flow path into the structure that cannot be isolated (unlike VIS operations) will draw fresh air into the fire and increase the fire in size and intensity. If the Inside Team chooses this tactic, the team needs to be fast, measured, and conservative with the distance the team is willing to travel into the structure without a hoseline. In this case, a tagline should be considered. **Finally, the introduction of additional fresh air from the new flowpath created should be limited to the best of the team's ability. The new entry point should be controlled and airflow should be limited, especially with a large body of fire present in the building, and/or inadequate GPM currently being discharged onto the fire.**

c. The Inside Team may opt to act as a second VIS team if needed (as may be the case with a garden style apartment and a large body of fire on the garden/entry side, and a number of tenable Charlie rooms).

d. When operating at the initial stages of an incident at a large commercial or multi-family occupancy where fire attack may be delayed (due to extended hose lays, water supply establishment, high-rise equipment deployment, etc.) and primary search and rescue cannot be delayed, the Inside Team should proceed to the area closest to the fire and begin searching away from the hazard for victims. **The same considerations involving flowpaths in bold listed under Section B apply to this situation as well.** When the number of occupancies or size of area is too much for the Inside Team to effectively search alone, the Outside Team can be requested to assist in the interior if not already engaged in a critical rescue function like VIS (Ex. fire on the third story of an apartment building, Truck 363 conducting search and rescue on the third floor; Truck 363 Oscar conducting search and rescue on the second floor).

3. Salvage

   a. If ordered by the IC, the Inside Team will be responsible for salvage and will coordinate this activity with the companies or Group performing fire attack.

4. Overhaul

   b. Due to the extra equipment and tools found on area aerial apparatus, and due to a larger call-load demand on area Engine Companies, Truck Companies assigned to structure fires will be responsible for the complete overhaul of a structure or other contents fire and will remain on the scene for the duration of the incident. A general rule-of-thumb shall be: If the Truck makes it to the scene, the Truck stays at the scene until salvage, overhaul and initial investigation is complete.

P.4. Outside and Inside Team Task Exchange and Team Unification

At any time as ordered by the IC, the Outside Team may be requested to do a traditional Inside Team task, and the Inside Team may be requested to do a traditional Outside Team task. For this reason, it is critical that the entire Truck Company know the primary tasks of each team. Also, at any time as ordered by the IC, the entire company may be assigned any task to perform as one team instead of splitting into two. However, the IC will need to communicate a deviation from the default approach (Examples: “Truck 363, I am assigning you Primary Search; I want you to take both teams and go to the Charlie Side and begin VIS; your accountability will be at Truck 363” or “Truck 1320, I am assigning you Primary Search; I want you to take both teams and attach to Engine 362 at the front door and begin an interior search, your accountability will be at Truck 1320.”).

P.5. Incident Command and Tactical Implications

Conversely, if the IC wishes to keep the teams separate in order to accomplish two objectives, the two-man, two-team approach allows him/her the flexibility to do that. This, after all, is the main benefit gained of the two-team approach. An example order over the radio might be “Tower 363, when you arrive Tower 363 will coordinate ventilation with Engine 362 and Tower 363 Oscar will conduct VIS; your accountability will be at Tower 363.”

P.6 Commercial Ventilation

On incidents involving a large commercial or multi-dwelling occupancy where vertical ventilation is needed, the Truck Company will function as one team with the Engineer positioned at the turn-table and the remaining company members accessing the roof.

P.7 Elevated Master Streams

When an elevated master stream is requested, the Truck Company will function as one team with personnel stationed at the pump panel, on the turn-table, and in the bucket of the platform or (at the Officer’s discretion) on the tip of the ladder. Should the Inside Team not be immediately available to help with this operation due to the involvement in another critical fireground task, the Outside Team will be responsible for this task with one person at the pump panel and one person in the bucket (or in the case of an aerial stick, one personnel at the turn table, and [at the crew’s discretion] one person at the ladder tip).

P.8 The Truck Company as an Engine Company

There will be times, especially at first-due fires, where the Truck Company will need to function as an Engine Company, at least until another Engine, Medic, or Squad arrives. The initial officer on scene will make the determination when these instances present themselves. When they do, Truck Company personnel will need to employ appropriate Fire Attack strategy and tactics. *For this reason, it is critical that Truck Company personnel be proficient at Engine operations (and specifically fire attack) as well as everything outlined in this SOP.* Upon more units arriving on

the scene, it may prove beneficial for the IC to assign units back to their traditional tasks for fireground effectiveness and efficiency.

P.9 3-Man Staffing Considerations

Although not ideal, many times the Truck Company will be staffed with 3 personnel and not 4. When this occurs, it is important that a plan is in place to accommodate for this reduction in force. When a Truck is staffed with 3 personnel, the IC will no longer have the opportunity to assign the Truck Company inside and outside objectives simultaneously (such as simultaneously assigning the company ventilation and search). Rather, Truck Company objectives should be prioritized and assigned to the three-person team. At fires in residential occupancies the IC should quickly determine the need and opportunity for search and rescue in support of fire attack. The IC should consider if VIS is a viable tactic and employ it as necessary. Once the need for rescue has been addressed, and even with three personnel, a well-trained and well-practiced Truck Company will be capable of completing many Outside support functions within the initial phase of the fire incident (examples include: proactive ground/aerial ladder placement, utility control, PPV, scene lighting, etc.).