



UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Affiliation: Command Guidelines

Subject: Common Terminology

Number: 450-00

Approved: 06/08/2021

By: AC Stephen Higgs

Last Reviewed: 09/22/2025

By: Battalion Chief Jon Wilde

COMMON TERMINOLOGY

- **Abandon** – The emergency rapid evacuation of firefighters from the fire building or hazardous area. Unless needed for the safe evacuation of firefighter(s) hose lines, tools, and other equipment will be left in place.
- **All-Clear (incident benchmark)** – The entire structure has had a primary and secondary search complete on all divisions and no victims have been located or all victims have been removed.
- **Alley Lay** – 2.5” or 3” hose extended from pumping apparatus for the purpose of supplying water to or near objective when objective is further than the reach of preconnected attack lines.
- **Attack Line** – Primary suppression line for initial attack, either offensive exterior or offensive interior attack.
- **Back-Up line** – Hose line used to protect the operating position and egress of forward fire attack crews.
- **Bi-directional flow** – Within the same opening, heated gasses escape at a high point while fresh air is drawn in below.
- **CAAN Report** – A status report transmitted over the radio including Conditions, Actions, Air, Needs.
- **Defensive Strategy** – Attacking the fire from a safe, distant, exterior or uninvolved flanking location for the purpose of taking energy away and extinguishing the fire, with an emphasis on protecting exposures.
- **Division** – A geographical location designation; Alpha side at grade level will be Division 1, levels above will be Division 2, Division 3, etc. Below grade floors (at the alpha side) are to be established as, Basement, Basement 2, and Basement 3 etc. Divisions A – B – C – D are geographic around the exterior of the structure in a clockwise fashion from Alpha and should not cause confusion with a Division designating a floor.
- **Division/Group Supervisor** – The Division/Group Supervisor implements the portion of the Incident Action Plan (IAP) pertaining to their Division/Group, supervises assigned resources, reports on the progress of operations and the status of assigned resources, and provides assessment and context as input to the shared situational picture.
- **Door control** – Control or limiting of entry/egress doors for the purpose of limiting fresh air intake and the exhaust of products of combustion until fire is under control, whenever possible.



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- **Dual Pumping** – Any water supply operation where one apparatus allows water to flow through an intake to another apparatus for the purpose of operating two (or more) pumps utilizing a single hydrant.
- **Emergency Alert Tones** – Tones broadcast over the radio by dispatch center preceding emergency incident information at the direction of the incident commander.
- **Exposure** – Other structures or property near fire that may become involved by transfer of heat or burning material from main fire, typically by convection or radiation.
- **Flow path** – Composed of at least one inlet opening and one exhaust opening, and the connecting volume between the openings. The direction of flow is determined by the difference in pressure. Heat and smoke in a high-pressure area will flow towards areas of lower pressure.
- **Forward Lay** – Supply hose is deployed from the water source to the incident location.
- **Group** – An organizational subdivision established to divide the incident management structure into functional areas of operation. A functional task designation.
- **Holding Short** – Stopping the apparatus short of the incident, not committed to the block or complex, remaining readily deployable to any location on the incident.
- **Horizontal ventilation** – Any technique by which heat, smoke, and other products of combustion are channeled horizontally out of a structure by way of existing or created horizontal openings such as windows, doors, or other openings in walls.
- **Hydraulic ventilation** – Ventilation accomplished by using a wide-angle nozzle pattern to draw the smoke from a compartment through an exterior opening.
- **Incident Benchmark** – Generally verifies that a major goal or task has been completed relative to life safety, incident stabilization, or property conservation.
- **Incident Safety Officer** – (ISO) is a member of the incident command team. This person works directly under and with the incident commander (IC) to help manage the risks to response personnel at incidents.
- **Investigation** – (nothing showing) assume command and complete a thorough size-up and investigation.
- **Large Diameter Hose (LDH)** – a hose used to move large quantities of water, with small friction loss factors.
- **Loss Stop (incident benchmark)** – Damage to the structure either through fire, water, or salvage operations, has stopped.



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- **Mechanical Ventilation** – Mechanical fans can be used to provide positive or negative pressure ventilation when used in tandem with either existing openings such as windows, skylights or heat/smoke vents on the roof; or by cutting new exhaust vents in the building.
- **Natural Ventilation** – Ventilation occurring without assistance from a mechanical device, using existing building openings and natural wind conditions.
- **Neutral Plane** – The neutral plane marks the level in a structure fire where below it air will be drawn into the structure and above it combustion gases will be exhausted. This plane can be identified only after an opening is made
- **Offensive Exterior** – Attacking the seat of the fire from the exterior of the structure, through a building opening such as a window or door, with the intent to quickly move interior with an attack line.
- **Offensive Interior** – Attacking the seat of the fire from the interior of the structure.
- **Oriented Search** – With this search method, the team leader remains ORIENTED to one place in the structure, such as the hose, the wall or an exit. The oriented person's job is to guide the searching firefighters back to them. The searching firefighters should use traditional search methods while working inside a room.
- **Personnel Accountability Report (PAR)** – system for identification, tracking and reporting of personnel at an incident, especially those entering and leaving an IDLH area; intended to permit rapid determination of who may be at risk or lost during sudden changes at the scene.
- **Positive Pressure Attack (PPA)** –The coordinated use of mechanical ventilation to help with fire suppression.
- **Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV)** – Mechanically increasing the pressure gradient of a compartment inside a structure.
- **Primary Search** – Rapid, systematic search mode to quickly locate any viable victims.
- **Primary Search All Clear (Incident Benchmark)** – Initial quick search of all divisions of a structure to ensure there are no obvious victims.
- **Protected Search** – Search of the structure, either primary or secondary in which we have a hose line to protect the searchers. This hose line is not taken on the search, the search is oriented off the line and the line is protecting the search and egress.
- **Rapid Intervention Team (RIT)** – A team of at least four firefighters assembled with tool cache assembled and standing by to initiate a firefighter rescue.



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- **Relay Pumping** – Any water supply operation where one apparatus supplies water to another through a discharge port.
- **Rescue** – Physical removal of a live person from the IDLH, hazardous area, or danger to a safe location.
- **Reverse Lay** – Supply Hose is deployed from the pumper at the incident scene back to the water source.
- **Second Line** – Next line in to support and assist the “Attack Line” in fire attack. Hose line may be utilized to cover another floor, exposed area, etc.
- **Secondary Search** – Methodical and thorough search used to verify that during the primary search, no victims were missed.
- **Secondary All Clear (Incident Benchmark)** – Thorough search of the divisions of a structure to ensure there are no obvious victims, conducted by a different crew than conducted the primary search. Secondary all-clear will be given for each level or area searched.
- **Shuttle Operation** – Any water supply operation that involves the transport of water to a fire scene by use of the vehicles water tank.
- **Softening the structure** – Improve access/egress in and around the fire building to include forcible entry, window bar removal, lights at doorways, egress ladders, fence access, and other possible obstruction removal.
- **Staging** – Designated area where all incoming resources will be staged and directed by an assigned staging officer or incident commander. Staging is primarily utilized on larger, complex or campaign type incidents. The term “Staging” may also be used on EMS incidents until PD confirms the scene is safe to enter.
- **Structure Sides** – Sides are to be established as Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta beginning at the address side of the structure (unless otherwise designated) and proceeding in a clockwise rotation around the structure. Additionally, exposures should be communicated with a side designation such as in a strip mall, apartment building or rowhouse i.e. Bravo exposure, Bravo two exposure, Bravo three exposure...
- **Super Plug** – Using a combination of gated appliances to secure control of all large diameter and small diameter ports of a fire hydrant.
- **Supply Line** – 3” or greater, hose used to supply apparatus from a water source
- **Tandem Pumping** – A short relay operation used to boost pressure in which the pumper taking water from the source pumps into the intake of the second pumper.



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- **Tank Water** – Water carried on a fire apparatus for initial, rapid fire attack.
- **Under Control (incident benchmark)** – Fire is no longer a threat of progressing. Under Control does not mean the fire has been extinguished. It implies that no additional resources will be required to extinguish the fire – forward progress of the fire has been stopped.
- **Uni-directional flow** – Air entering one opening and exiting from another – typically low to high.
- **Unprotected Search** – The search of an area without the protection of a hose line, however a water can should be utilized.
- **Vent Enter Isolate Search (VEIS)** – Operation of entering the structure on an unprotected search, isolating the compartment and conducting a rapid search in that compartment. After search/rescue of that compartment crewmembers exit the structure.
- **Vent Limited** – A fire where the heat release rate and fire spread are regulated by the available oxygen in a space.
- **Vertical ventilation** – Ventilating at a point above the fire through existing or created openings and channeling the contaminated atmosphere vertically within the structure and out the top. This can be done with openings in the skylights, roof vents, roof doors or created openings.
- **Withdrawal** – The removal of firefighters from the fire building or hazardous area, removing with them; hose lines, tools, and other equipment.