



**UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY  
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

**Affiliation: Command Guidelines**

**Subject: Search & Rescue**

**Number: 450-41**

**Approved: 8/23/2024**

**By: AC Dustin Dern**

**Last Reviewed:**

**By:**

**DEFINITIONS:**

**10% Search** - Opportunistic targeted search of probable locations of potential victims (i.e., directly inside exterior doors, just outside bedrooms in hallways, etc.).

**Anchor** - The member of the search crew positioned at the starting/ending point of a search pattern.

**Primary Search** - Rapid, systematic search mode to quickly locate any viable victims.

**Protected Search** - Search completed with a charged hose line.

**Secondary Search** - Methodical and thorough search used to verify that during the primary search no victims were missed.

**Unprotected Search** - Search completed without a charged hose line.

**PURPOSE:**

To establish a common approach when performing and completing searches and rescue on an emergency incident.

**Search Priorities:**

Search operations should start and progress through a structure based on these priorities:

1. Location of known victims
2. Closest to fire
3. Fire floor starting closest to fire and working away
4. Floor above fire
5. Floor below fire

**Pre-Entry Considerations:**

Before entering any structure, the search team(s) should consider the following:

1. Type of construction and size of the structure
2. Location(s) of fire and where it is likely to travel
3. Location(s) and progress of fire attack
4. Communications with other crews working in IDLH
5. Preplan information
6. Search area vs. air supply compatibility
7. Determination of where possible victims are to be located (i.e., nighttime/bedrooms).
8. Best entry point for search
9. What type of search
10. What tools will be most beneficial



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11. Unusual circumstances, hazards, or safety concerns
12. Communicate search plan to IC

**SEARCH GUIDELINE:**

Both a Primary and Secondary Search should be completed on all fire ground incidents. The search method chosen will reflect the specific need at the time/type of the assignment. A search may occur in conjunction with fire attack or shortly afterwards.

- 1.0 Search methods will vary depending on pre-entry considerations.
  - 1.1. Utilizing a TIC(s) when completing a search will greatly enhance the overall success of the search as well as increase accountability. [See TIC guideline.](#)
  - 1.2. An oriented man search can be conducted quickly in several areas at once at the direction of an anchored officer or team lead (anchor points can and will vary).
  - 1.3. A perimeter search (i.e., TIC, left hand, right hand), although oriented, is slower and less effective than an oriented man search.
  - 1.4. Large area searches are complex by nature and must be coordinated with (potentially) several companies simultaneously. A search is conducted by using the search rope as a guide and is generally used for large structures with large, open areas or more complex interiors such as multiple cubicles or intersecting hallways.
- 2.0 **Primary search** - the company or crew will gather all appropriate information about the incident, gather appropriate tools and equipment, and make entry on their chosen search method.
  - 2.1. Communicate with IC any changing conditions, finding a victim, elevation (division) changes, CAAN report, or any other special event found or experienced while searching.
  - 2.2. When task complete, communicate with IC that the "primary search is "CLEAR", exit the building with PAR or await another assignment.
  - 2.3. Once a primary search is completed on all divisions, the IC can announce the area is "All Clear", completing an incident benchmark.
- 3.0 **Secondary search** - the company or crew will gather all appropriate information about the incident, gather appropriate tools and equipment, and make entry on their chosen search method.



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- 3.1. Communicate with IC with changing conditions, finding a victim, elevation (division) changes, CAAN report, or any other special event found or experienced while searching.
- 3.2. When the task is complete, communicate with IC that the secondary search is "CLEAR" and exit the building with PAR or await another assignment.
- 3.3. Once a secondary search is completed on all divisions, the IC can then announce the area "All Clear", completing an incident benchmark.

**RESCUE GUIDELINE:**

- 1.0 Victims found in a fire or other unsuitable area must be removed from the hazardous environment as quickly as possible.
- 2.0 Upon locating a victim, it is critical to notify command and begin rescue operations immediately. Do not delay the rescue of a victim if you are unable to communicate with command. Update command with additional resource needs early as conditions of a rescue change.
  - 2.1. Critical information communicated is: Crew, victim location, additional resources, and rescue egress route.
- 3.0 How to package the victim often depends on size and location in proximity to your egress. Choose the most efficient method for packaging.
- 4.0 Based on victim location and fire conditions, use the quickest, easiest route for rescue egress. Depending on these factors, it may be necessary to isolate the victim for packaging in a room and rescue through a window.
  - 4.1. For window rescues, the tip of the ladder should be placed level with or just under the windowsill.

Refer to [VEIS Guideline](#) for search from exterior of structure.