



Dothan Fire Department POLICY	
Policy Name:	Rules of Engagement for Structure Fires
Policy Number:	20
Standard:	International Association of Fire Chiefs (SHS Section)
Implementation Date:	September 1, 2018
Date of Last Revision:	September 1, 2018
Authority:	Larry H. Williams, Jr, Fire Chief

## I. PURPOSE

To provide our members with objective-based decision making parameters for determining acceptable risk at a working structure fire.

## II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Dothan Fire Department that the first arriving member at a hazardous incident scene shall perform a size-up and conduct a risk assessment based on the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Safety, Health and Survival Section's Rules of Engagement (ROE) for structural firefighting and incident command.

The objective of the "ROE" is to provide parameters for decision-making and action to minimize the potential for injury and/or death. The first arriving members entering an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) are at most risk for injury and death and will be the first to identify unsafe conditions and practices. The ROE are critical in determining the initial risk for members and "Go" or "No-Go" situations. This initial risk assessment and on-going risk management system is nationally recognized as "best practice" and must be understood by all members (regardless of rank) operating at working incidents.

Additionally, the ROE specify "10 Rules" that assist our members with determining 'Acceptability of Risk' and a 'Risk Assessment'. This document is a great educational tool that is absolutely vital in determining operational strategies for a working structure fire. The amount of risk that we take can only be assumed in a **highly** calculated and controlled manner. Highly calculated and controlled refers to effective application of department policies and guidelines, training and the safety systems (PPE, radios, apparatus, water, etc.) that must be used/followed at all times, in order to take any risks.

We must always begin our operational response with the assumption that we can make a difference for our customers by conducting standard incident operations. The ROE and our Risk Management approach is based on us always conducting operations within standard operational and safety policies and guidelines.

Rescue operations in the hot zone are the only place where, based on the possibility of saving a threatened victim, the RMP allows workers to take a significantly higher level of risk. High rescue mode operations are based on a deliberate situation evaluation and the continual application of safety policies and procedures by the IC.

The Rules of Engagement for Firefighter Survival and the Incident Commanders Rules of Engagement for Firefighter Safety were developed and published by the International Association of Fire Chief (IAFC) Safety, Health, and Survival Section in 2010. The DFD has formally adopted the ROE as our standard decision making parameters for determining acceptable risk at working structure fires.

## Rules of Engagement for Firefighter Survival

1. Size-up Your Tactical Area of Operation
2. Determine the Occupant Survival Profile
3. **DO NOT** Risk Your Life for Lives or Property That Cannot Be Save
4. Extend **LIMITED** Risk to Protect **SAVABLE** Property
5. Extend **Vigilant** and **Measured** Risk to Protect and Rescue **SAVABLE** Lives
6. Go in Together, *Stay Together*, Come Out Together
7. Maintain Continuous Awareness of Your Air Supply, Situation, Location and Fire Conditions
8. Constantly Monitor Fireground Communications for Critical Radio Reports
9. You Are Required to Report Unsafe Practices or Conditions That Can Harm You. Stop, Evaluate and Decide
10. You Are Required to Abandon Your Position and Retreat Before Deteriorating Conditions Can Harm You
11. Declare a May Day as Soon as You **THINK** You Are in Danger

## The Incident Commanders Rules of Engagement for Firefighter Safety

1. Rapidly Conduct, or Obtain a 360 Degree Situational Size-Up on the Incident
2. Determine the Occupant Survival Profile
3. Conduct an Initial Risk Assessment and Implement a **SAFE ACTION PLAN**
4. If You Do Not Have the Resources to Safely Support and Protect Firefighters, Seriously Consider a Defensive Strategy
5. **DO NOT** Risk Firefighter Lives for Lives or Property That Cannot Be Saved. Seriously Consider a Defensive Strategy
6. Extend **LIMITED** Risk to Protect **SAVABLE** Property
7. Extend **Vigilant** and **Measured** Risk to Protect and Rescue **SAVABLE** Lives
8. Act Upon Reported Unsafe Practices or Conditions That Can Harm Firefighters. Stop, Evaluate and Decide
9. Maintain Frequent Two-Way Communications and Keep Interior Crews Informed of Changing Conditions
10. Obtain Frequent Progress Reports and Revise the Action Plan
11. Ensure Accurate Accountability of Every Firefighter Location and Status
12. If After Completing the Primary Search, Little or No Progress Towards Fire Control Has Been Achieved, Seriously Consider a Defensive Strategy
13. Always Have a Rapid Intervention Team in Place at All Working Fires
14. Always Have Firefighter Rehab Services in Place at All Working Fires

**10 Rules of Engagement for Structural Firefighting**

**Acceptability of Risk**

1. No building or property is worth the life of a firefighter
2. All interior firefighting involves an inherent risk
3. Some risk is acceptable, in a measured and controlled manner
4. No level of risk is acceptable where there is no potential to save lives or savable property
5. Fire fighters shall not be committed to interior offensive firefighting operations in abandoned or derelict buildings

**Risk Assessment**

1. All feasible measures shall be taken to limit or avoid risks through risk assessment by a qualified officer
2. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to evaluate the level or risk in every situation
3. Risk assessment is a continuous process for the entire duration of each incident
4. If conditions change, and risk increases, change strategy and tactics
5. No building or property is worth the life of a fire fighter

Risk Assessment/Rules of Engagement			
Fire Fighter Injury/ Life Safety Risk	High Probability of Success	Marginal Probability of Success	Low Probability of Success
<b>Low Risk</b>	Initiate offensive operations. Continue to monitor risk factors.	Initiate offensive operations. Continue to monitor risk factors.	Initiate offensive operations. Continue to monitor risk factors.
<b>Medium Risk</b>	Initiate offensive operations. Continue to monitor risk factors. Employ all available risk control options.	Initiate offensive operations. Continue to monitor risk factors. Be prepared to go defensive if risk increases.	Do not initiate offensive operations. Reduce risk to fire fighters and actively pursue risk control options.
<b>High Risk</b>	Initiate offensive operations only with confirmation of realistic potential to save endangered lives.	Do not initiate offensive operations that will put fire fighters at risk for injury or fatality.	Initiate defensive operations only.

**III. RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY**

The Fire Chief reserves the authority to amend, modify, or change this policy.

**IV. APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy is adopted and approved on this 1<sup>st</sup> day of September, 2018.

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**Larry H. Williams, Jr.**

Fire Chief

DOTHAN FIRE DEPARTMENT