



Fireground Search and Rescue Operations

Guideline

April 2011

Effective Date

Norwich Township Fire Department GOG # 39

Reference

New

Rescinds

Purpose:

The purpose of this **document** is to provide a scope and guideline for the IC and/or first arriving Company Officer as to when to conduct a Search and Rescue attempt on the fireground. This is not intended to be about tactics but rather to define the purpose of when, how and why a search is required.

Responsibility:

- I. It shall be the responsibility of **all fire officers** to implement this operating guideline.
- II. It shall be the responsibility of **all fire officers** to train members in the application of this guideline.
- III. It shall be the responsibility of each member to know, understand and use this guideline as it applies to the situation at hand.

Guideline Content:

A search for a victim or probable victim will be ordered by the incident commander or first arriving company officer based on the information received when sizing up the scene based on initial reports found on scene or relayed through the alarm office.

A search **will not** be conducted unless ordered by the IC or first arriving Company Officer.

WHEN

The IC or first arriving Company Officer must make several judgment call on whether a search is necessary or has a probable good outcome for a victim. The following must be considered before ordering a search:

- What is the "Rescue Profile" of the situation?
- Do I have enough units to conduct a search and Rescue attempt to maximize the chance of success?

A search **will not** be ordered unless sufficient intelligence indicates that there is a victim(s) that need rescued. This can be many things:

- Dispatch information
- Night time, consider bedroom areas able to sustain life.
- Bystanders or escaped occupants that confirm a victim is inside and unaccounted for.

HOW

There are many techniques to conduct a search. These need to be trained and practiced on at the company level before the incident occurs. It is imperative that a good training regimen is developed by the training officer and Company Officers to assure consistency for all members. This will allow common terminology and techniques.

An IC need not dictate every specific move his companies make, however he can order things such as 'E-81 **VES** the bedroom on the Charlie/Delta corner.' It may be as simple as directing a company to a certain room or floor and allowing them to decide how to accomplish the task.

Any time a search is ordered, it should be known to all units on the fireground. Any and all operations should be conducted to help facilitate its success.

WHY

We conduct a search based on information gathered as above. We want to be as aggressive as possible with our safety in mind **FIRST** when conditions call for it. Bases for a search can be summarized like this:

Risk a lot to save a lot!
Risk a little to save a little!
Risk nothing to save nothing!

Even though firefighters want to be aggressive, it is the IC responsibility and duty to make sure his units do not risk everything to save nothing.

Approved by Assistant Fire Chief

Signed copy on file_____
Signature_____
Date

Approved by Fire Chief

Signed copy on file_____
Signature_____
Date