

	Standard Operating Guideline – West Fargo Fire Department		01.016
	Subject: IDLH Operations		
	Section: Deployment and Safety		
	Date Authorized: 12/1/2019	Authorized by:	
Date Reviewed: 10/1/2020	Chief Daniel Fuller		

Intent

The intent of this guideline is to establish standard initial actions of the first arriving fire company on scene of a working fire or potential immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) environment.

References

Occupational Safety and Health Administration 1910.134(g)(4)- Procedures for Interior Firefighting

Definitions

Hazardous Area: The area where employees might be exposed to a hazardous atmosphere. A particular substance, device, event, circumstance, or condition that presents a danger to employees of the fire department.

Hazardous Atmosphere: Any atmosphere that is oxygen deficient or that contains a toxic or disease producing contaminant. A hazardous atmosphere may or may not be immediately dangerous to life and health.

IDLH (Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health): An atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive, or asphyxiate substance that poses an immediate threat to life or would interfere with an individual’s ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere. An IDLH atmosphere for interior structure fires is “a fire that has spread inside a building where high temperatures, heat, and dense smoke” are present.

Incipient Stage Fire: A fire which is in the initial or beginning stage and which can be controlled or extinguished by portable fire extinguishers, Class II standpipe, or small hose system without the need for protective clothing or breathing apparatus.

Interior Structural Fire Fighting: The physical activity of fire suppression, rescue, or both, inside of buildings or enclosed structures which are involved in fire beyond the incipient stage.

Guideline

1. A team of at least two firefighters should be assembled prior to entering an IDLH atmosphere.
2. The team entering the hazardous atmosphere should maintain some form of crew integrity and assure their PASS devices are operational.
3. Two additional firefighters must maintain a position out of the IDLH atmosphere as determined by the incident commander

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4. The personnel outside of the IDLH must be equipped with PPE to enter the hazardous atmosphere to rescue an entry team.
5. If the initial entry team requires rescue, the requirement to have two personnel remain outside no longer applies because of the change to rescue mode.
6. One of the two outside firefighters may provide support functions for the incident.
 - a. Examples of possible outside support functions are:
 - i. Control Utilities
 - ii. Incident Command
 - iii. Horizontal Ventilation
 - iv. Stretch backup hose lines
 - v. Feed attack line into building
 - vi. Establish water supply
 - vii. Place ladders
 - viii. Pump Operations
 - b. Each outside firefighter must have a portable radio each and maintain radio communications with the interior team.
 - i. They should maintain accountability for the team operating in the IDLH and be prepared to perform a rescue of that team if the need arises.
 - ii. The outside team needs to have full PPE with SCBA ready to put into service.
7. In anticipation of the arrival of additional fire fighters to fill out the two in/two out requirement, the first arriving company may initiate actions outside of the IDLH in preparation for operations. These actions may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Size up
 - b. Establish water supply
 - c. Placement of ladders
 - d. Stretching an attack line to the entrance of the building
 - e. Exposure protection
 - f. Defensive fire attack
 - g. Prep for ventilation
8. If, upon arrival at the scene, personnel find an imminent life-threatening situation where immediate action may prevent the loss of life or serious injury, such action shall be permitted with less than four personnel on the scene. See SOG 05.014 Risk Management for how to operate in situations where the two in/two out rule can be violated.
9. There is the potential that a situation will exist when there are less than three individuals available to staff a company.

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- a. This could be for a short time because of injury, illness or other unforeseen circumstances.
- b. In such an instance that is short-term, the shift commander may decide it is in the best interest of the citizens to permit the engine company to function with only two people.
- c. Within the scope of this policy, this is considered an extreme circumstance and the officer is given discretion to act as he or she deems necessary.

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