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## INCIDENT SAFETY

### SCOPE

This guideline shall apply to all members of the Stoney Point Fire Department and shall be adhered to by all members.

### PURPOSE

To establish the standards and procedures for conducting safe incident operations.

### DEFINITIONS

**Backdraft** - an "Explosion" or rapid burning of heated gases, resulting from the introduction of oxygen when air is admitted to a building that is heavily charged with smoke from a fire that has depleted the oxygen content of the building

**Defensive Strategy** - exterior attack directed to first reduce fire extension and then bring the fire under control

**Flashover** - simultaneous ignition of highly heated combustibles in an area

**Guideline** - a general rule, principle, outline of a policy

**Incident Commander** – (IC) The individual responsible for the management of all incident operations

**Member** – any career, volunteer, staff, and auxiliary personnel affiliated with the department

**Offensive Strategy** - interior attack and related support directed toward quickly bringing the fire under control

**Safety** - the condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injury, or loss

**Shall** - indicates a mandatory requirement

### GUIDELINES

Safety is a primary function at any incident scene. The Incident Commander shall be responsible for the safety of all personnel involved and may delegate authority to a dedicated Incident Safety Officer. Stoney Point Fire Department is an all hazards emergency response agency, fire, rescue, and emergency medical response. All personnel shall understand that each member has a role in the safety of residents and responders alike. All incidents begin with the dispatch notification and end upon return to the Station. Situational awareness and a good incident scene size up to identify potential hazards and threats are essential to a good incident safety plan. Safety is key throughout the incident period.

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### Response and Return to Station

It is imperative for personnel to remember that the response and return portion of any incident is very dangerous and safe operation of the apparatus while on the road is essential. The apparatus must always be operated “with due regard” to others travelling on the roads. A safe speed for the weather, light and traffic conditions must be maintained. All intersections must be properly cleared, one lane at a time before proceeding, regardless of the type of intersection. Emergency traffic equipment such as the lights, electronic siren, mechanical siren, and air horn must be utilized whenever in emergency traffic mode. The crew shall wear their seatbelts whenever the apparatus is in motion. The Driver/Operator shall maintain a safe distance from other vehicles during any response or return from an incident. All traffic laws shall be obeyed whenever not in emergency traffic mode.

### Incident Scene

Apparatus shall be positioned on scene to protect responders from vehicles and other hazards, such as fire, hazardous materials, and collapse zones. All personnel shall properly wear all personal protective equipment appropriate to the incident, or as directed by the Incident Commander. Personnel are responsible for their own safety, and that of other responders and civilians on or near the incident scene. An incident boundary shall be established by the Incident Commander to aid responders in identifying potential hazards to personnel and civilians. Personnel should be identified to monitor the perimeter to prevent unauthorized access by civilians and other people not wearing personal protective equipment.

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### Emergency Medical Response

Emergency medical response is the most common incident that Stoney point Fire Department personnel are likely to participate on. These incidents pose unique safety threats to medical responders and civilians. Proper personal protective equipment shall be worn throughout the incident to mitigate some of the hazards. Care shall be taken to remain situationally aware of the responder's environment for the following hazards:

- Domestic violence situations where there are active aggressors
- Controlled substance paraphernalia and associated exposures (needles, etc.)
- Unstable environment (fall and collapse hazards)
- Environmental hazards (animals, storms, heat or cold, etc.)
- Infectious disease exposure

Is the risk to response personnel worth the benefit to the victim's health or life?

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### Technical Rescue Response

Technical rescue incidents pose unique threats to the responders and civilians on the incident scene. Proper personal protective equipment shall be worn throughout the incident to mitigate some of the hazards. A perimeter shall be established to prevent unauthorized admittance of civilians into the incident scene to prevent further injury. Technical rescue incidents encompass vehicle and machinery rescues, water rescues, high angle rope rescues, wilderness rescues and support for structural collapse, confined space, and trench rescues. Care shall be taken to remain situationally aware of the responder's environment for the following hazards:

- Unstable environment (fall, roll, and collapse hazards)
- Environmental hazards (animals, storms, heat or cold, etc.)
- Electrocution or other utility hazards
- Falling or flying debris (tree limbs, metal or glass, rocks, etc.)
- Becoming pinned, entrapped, entangled, or pulled under
- Hazardous substances (drugs, waste, HAZMAT, etc.)
- Infectious disease exposure

The Incident Commander shall assign an Incident Safety Officer and delegate the authority to enforce safety procedures on all technical rescue incidents. Is the risk to responders worth the benefit to victims?

### Hazardous Materials Response

Hazardous materials response incidents pose unique threats to responders and civilians on the incident scene. Proper personal protective equipment shall be worn throughout the incident to mitigate some of the hazards. A perimeter shall be established to prevent unauthorized admittance of civilians into the incident scene to prevent further injury. Hazardous materials response incidents encompass Carbon Monoxide alarms, Liquid Petroleum Gas explosions, chemical spills, or toxic gas releases. Care shall be taken to remain situationally aware of the responder's environment for the following hazards:

- Unstable environment (fall, roll, and collapse hazards)
- Environmental hazards (animals, storms, heat or cold, etc.)
- Toxic exposure (inhalation, ingestion, absorption, splash, etc.)
- Explosion or fire hazards

The Incident Commander shall assign an Incident Safety Officer and delegate the authority to enforce safety procedures on all Hazardous Materials incidents.

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### Fire Suppression Response

Fire suppression incidents are complex and pose many threats to responders and civilians on the incident scene. Proper personal protective equipment shall be worn throughout the incident to mitigate some of the hazards. A good 360-degree incident survey shall be conducted by the Incident Commander to identify any potential hazards or threats to incident personnel. A perimeter shall be established to prevent unauthorized admittance of civilians into the incident scene to prevent further injury. Fire suppression incidents encompass wildland urban interface, vehicle, and structure fires. Care shall be taken to remain situationally aware of the responder's environment for the following hazards:

- Unstable environment (fall, roll, and collapse hazards)
- Environmental hazards (animals, storms, heat or cold, etc.)
- Electrocution or other utility hazards
- Falling or flying debris (tree limbs, metal or glass, rocks, etc.)
- Becoming lost, pinned, entrapped, or entangled
- Hazardous substances (drugs, waste, HAZMAT, etc.)
- Toxic exposure (inhalation, ingestion, absorption, splash, etc.)
- Explosion or fire hazards
- Running out of air
- Traffic hazards (struck by a vehicle or apparatus)

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The Incident Commander shall assign an Incident Safety Officer and delegate the authority to enforce safety procedures on all fire suppression incidents. Is the risk to responders worth the benefit to victims or their property?

### Mitigation Measures

There are many measures that can be taken by the Incident Commander, Incident Safety Officer, Company Officer, or individual Firefighter to mitigate the hazards and threats posed any the incident scene. It is imperative that these measures be employed to protect both civilians and responders. The Firefighter Adage goes "risk a lot to save a lot, risk a little to save a little and risk nothing to save nothing". Never place yourself or others in a dangerous situation without weighing the cost and benefit ratio to emergency responders and victims. Life safety is the first priority, followed by property conservation and incident stabilization.



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### Offensive Firefighting Hazards

Whenever possible, offensive firefighting operations shall be conducted to preserve life and property. Offensive firefighting poses many hazards to incident personnel. Among these hazards are:

- Limited access to the fire (one way in or out)
- Incidents containing hazardous materials
- Hidden fire, Backdraft, Flashover, or other threats
- Operating above the fire (floor or roof), or below ground level (basement)
- Operating under involved roofs or where the fire can get behind the crew
- Opposing fire streams (pushing the fire, flying debris, etc.)

### Offensive Firefighting Mitigations

When conducting offensive operations utilize the following mitigation measures:

- Wear full structural personal protective equipment at all times
- Obtain and maintain personnel accountability (regular PAR checks)
- Maintain situational awareness throughout the operation (360, radio, etc.)
- Assign an Incident Safety Officer
- Assign Division and Group Supervisors to maintain the span of control
- Establish and maintain two means of access and egress (ladders, windows)
- Position fire attack crews in safe positions (communicate to prevent opposing streams) (attack and backup lines)
- Shut off utilities (Power, gas, etc.)
- Establish Rapid Intervention Teams
- Conduct Primary and Secondary Searches
- Establish and mandate the use of REHAB
- Strictly enforce the 2 in, 2 out rule
- Proper use of ventilation techniques and tactics

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### **Incident Evacuation**

All offensive interior firefighting operations shall be abandoned when the extent of the fire prohibits effective and safe operations, or the structure becomes unsafe to operate within. The Incident Commander and Incident Safety Officer shall be alert to unsafe conditions and evacuate all personnel immediately. Evacuations shall be based upon the immediacy of the threat, the type of threat and location of the threat. A radio call for evacuation followed by 3 air horn blasts from the attack apparatus. The effected personnel shall immediately evacuate, and defensive operations shall commence.

### **Defensive Firefighting Hazards**

Defensive firefighting operations shall be conducted whenever offensive firefighting operations would be impractical or would pose too high of a risk to response personnel. Among the hazards that could recommend defensive firefighting are:

- Full involvement of the structure
- Imminent Backdraft or Flashover conditions
- Structural collapse
- Hazardous Materials or explosive threat
- Active assailant

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### **Defensive Firefighting Mitigations**

When conducting defensive operations utilize the following mitigation measures:

- Wear full structural personal protective equipment at all times
- Obtain and maintain personnel accountability (regular PAR checks)
- Maintain situational awareness throughout the operation (360, radio, etc.)
- Assign an Incident Safety Officer
- Assign Division and Group Supervisors to maintain the span of control
- Position fire attack crews in safe positions (consider master streams or ground monitors) (communicate to prevent opposing streams)
- Shut off utilities (Power, gas, etc.)
- Establish Rapid Intervention Teams
- Establish and mandate the use of REHAB
- Protect exposures



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### Ground Ladders

Ground ladders provide incident personnel with the ability to establish additional routes of access and egress for fire and rescue personnel. Proper positioning of ground ladders at an incident can improve the overall safety of the personnel involved. The following considerations shall be followed when employing ground ladders on scene:

- Safely retrieve the appropriate ground ladder from the apparatus
- Transport the ground ladder using an approved technique
- Position the ground ladder
  - Near corners to mitigate against structural instability
  - At the appropriate angle for the desired function (rescue, attack, etc.)
  - 3-5 rungs above the roofline for visibility
- Provide for at least 2 routes of access or egress

### Aerial Ladders

Stoney Point Fire Department and our mutual aid partners operate Aerial Ladder Trucks. The proper and safe positioning and usage of these apparatus on the incident scene is imperative. The following considerations shall be followed when employing Aerial ladders on scene:

- Properly position the outriggers to provide a stable platform
- Position the apparatus at a corner to provide the most flexibility if possible
- Be alert to overhead obstructions (wires, trees, buildings, etc.)
- Crews operating on the Aerial ladder shall utilize ladder belts

### Structural Collapse

Structural collapse is a unique hazard in both fire suppression and technical rescue incidents. The Incident Commander shall be alert to the possibility of a structural collapse at any incident involving a structure and incorporate mitigation measures into the tactical plan. A working knowledge of the various types of building construction is invaluable for incident response personnel as a safety factor.

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### Structural Collapse Warning Signs

All incident personnel shall be situationally aware of the potential for structural collapse at any incident involving a structure. Some of the early warning signs of a potential structural collapse include:

- Cracks in exterior walls
- Sounds of structural movement (creaking, snapping, etc.)
- Smoke or water leaking through walls
- Interior or exterior walls or columns leaning, twisting, or flexing
- Floors or roofs that “give” or flex as Firefighters walk on them
- Large open, unsupported roofs
- Signs or marquees pulling away from walls
- Ornamental or veneer walls bowing outwards
- Lightweight truss, or bowstring truss roofs exposed to heat

The Incident Commander, Incident Safety Officer or any responder shall alert all incident personnel of any potential collapse hazard immediately.

### Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility

It is important to remember that every emergency responder of Stoney Point Fire Department is a Safety Officer. Every hazard or threat identified by any member shall be relayed to all personnel on the incident scene. Firefighters and other responders shall remain situationally aware throughout every incident and watch out for other responders and civilians.

### References

NFPA 1001

NFPA 1021

NFPA 1521

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