

Enchanted Circle Regional Fire Association

Model Operating Procedures

Loss Control

Purpose

Loss Control operations are an essential element of good fire department customer service, and promote the image of firefighters as craftsmen. The clear objective of *Loss Control* operations is to minimize the damage done by the fire and by firefighting operations. Loss control primarily involves *Salvage Operations* and *Overhaul Operations*. This procedure establishes guidelines for *Salvage* and *Overhaul*.

Salvage Operations

Salvage operations involves activities to protect the building and its contents from damage resulting from the fire, fire suppression activities, or subsequent exposure to the weather. Some damage is unavoidable due to the need for forcible entry, application of water, ventilation, and the search for extension of the fire. However, all of these activities serve to reduce the total damage when appropriately used.

Salvage operations should begin as soon as adequate personnel are available, and often occur simultaneously with the fire attack. Salvage efforts should typically begin in areas most severely threatened by the fire and firefighting operations. In most cases that will be areas immediately adjacent to or below the fire area. The operation should then expand outward until all areas of potential loss are protected.

In some cases, threatened contents may be removed to a safe location. More commonly, contents are grouped in the center of rooms and covered with salvage covers. They should be raised off the floor when possible.

Accumulations of water should be removed by making use of existing drains, using squeegees, brooms and mops to sweep water out doors or to drains, constructing chutes from salvage covers, or using portable pumps to pump water out of the structure.

Openings created for ventilation, forcible entry and other firefighting operations should be covered with plastic, plywood, or other material to protect and secure the contents of the building.

Overhaul Operations

Overhaul is searching for and completely extinguishing all fire in the structure, including hidden fire in walls, ceilings, crawl spaces, utility chases, etc. The primary objective of *Overhaul* is to eliminate the possibility of a rekindle after the fire department has made up and gone home. *Overhaul* is typically carried out by the engine and truck companies assigned to fire attack. Truck companies assigned to *Overhaul* operations should be equipped with fire hooks, dry wall hooks, halligan bars and axes to facilitate their "open up" assignment. At the same time, Engine companies assigned to *Overhaul* operations should keep a charged hose line ready to extinguish any fire uncovered by the Truck companies. In order to reduce water damage, and reduce effort required to move a larger hose line around, it may be advantageous to reduce the size of the attack line. A 1 3/4" or 2 1/2" line may be reduced at the nozzle to a 1" line and nozzle, which is easier to maneuver and makes it easier to apply small amounts of water. Engine companies reducing the size of their line should also assure that all connections are tight and not leaking in order to keep water damage to a minimum. Engines supplying overhaul lines may disconnect from their water supply and operate from tank water at the IC's discretion.

During rest breaks for crews assigned to **Overhaul**, at least two firefighters should remain in the fire area to detect any re-ignition. The IC is responsible for assuring a thorough overhaul of the fire, and assuring that no hidden fire remains. In particularly difficult overhaul situations, the IC may arrange for a *Fire Watch* company to remain on scene and watch for evidence of rekindle. Alternatively, the IC may schedule a post fire drive-by/walk through inspection.

Ordering Sufficient Resources

If *Salvage* and *Overhaul* operations are to be most effective in reducing damage, they should occur concurrently with fire attack. This will require companies dedicated to *Salvage* and *Overhaul*. The IC should strongly consider a *Special Call* order for additional companies, or request for an *additional alarm* to meet these requirements.