

**JEFFERSON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #1
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

SOG 308

SEARCH AND RESCUE

I. PURPOSE

A. Life safety is always the primary concern to firefighters. Both the safety of civilians and firefighters must constantly be kept in mind at the scene of an emergency. Whenever a structure is involved in fire, the potential exists for a loss of human life. In order to reduce this risk, structures need to be quickly and thoroughly searched so that victims can be located and rescued.

II. SCOPE

A. This guideline outlines the procedures to follow when conducting a primary and secondary search of a building involved in a fire. These standards apply to all personnel of the District.

III. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

A. It will be the responsibility of the Chief and the Officers to insure that these guidelines are followed.

IV. STANDARDS

A. Definitions

1. Primary Search is a quick initial search of a structure or area within a structure that is performed prior to complete fire control and ventilation. The primary search is aimed at locating and rescuing victims of fire and the products of combustion.
2. Secondary Search is a thorough search of a structure or area within a structure that is performed after initial fire control and ventilation activities have been completed. Thoroughness, rather than time, is the critical factor in a secondary search.
3. Wide Area Search is a search that is performed in a large open area (e.g., warehouse, store, office complex, etc.) where entry deep into the room is required. Typically, multiple firefighters will be required to search this large area and penetration deep into the room will present dangers of crews becoming separated and/or lost inside the structure. Wide area searches require different search tactics than do typical search situations. Use of personal safety ropes is required to keep firefighters in contact with hose-lines, entry doors or other firefighters.

B. Search Procedure

1. A primary and secondary search of every building involved in a fire should be conducted as quickly as possible. Efforts should focus on conducting this

- search until such time that the search is completed or it is determined that a search and subsequent rescue is impossible.
2. Search teams shall consist of at least two firefighters. Full protective clothing including SCBA shall be worn and search crews shall be equipped with a portable radio for communicating with the Incident Commander. When conducting a wide area search, personal safety ropes should be carried and utilized. Standard search techniques should use the right hand search pattern if it is appropriate.
 3. Initial operations can be done around the completion of the primary search. Frequently, the primary search and initial fire attack can proceed simultaneously. Regardless of what is reported by spectators, the only way an Incident Commander may be entirely sure that a building is free of occupants is to conduct a thorough interior search.
 4. Time is a critical factor in the primary search process. The search crews shall conduct a quick search of all areas that can be entered. Completion of the primary search shall be reported to the Incident Commander as soon as completed.
 5. In the event victims are discovered and rescue is required, tactics shall be directed towards affecting the rescue. When victims are removed from the structure, they shall be treated, protected from the elements and prevented from re-entering the structure.
 6. Secondary searches are completed at a slower pace after fire has been controlled and ventilation initiated. Upon completion of the secondary search, a report shall be made to the Incident Commander as soon as completed.
 7. When search activities are under way, all initial attack efforts must be directed toward supporting the search and rescue effort. Hose lines must be placed in a manner to control interior access, confine the fire and protect avenues of escape.
 8. Multiple victims should be removed to one location for more effective treatment. Command should coordinate and assign treatment crews as required.
 9. In the event that a fatality is discovered during the search, the body should be left in place for removal after investigation by police and the coroner. The Incident Commander should be immediately notified of such a finding and efforts should be made to protect the scene for later investigation.

APPROVED:

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