

Putting Your Hands On It!

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When learning new skills and techniques the best method of training is to actually put your hands on the tools that we are expected use. Reading, discussing, and drawing on the white board can be great learning tools, however there is much more that we need and should be doing. During a recent shift, my fire house set up a walk-through of one of our high rise structures. After walking through and looking at all of the nuisances and special items that relate to this structure, we conducted a scenario. In theory, the strategy and tactics portion of the initial assignments high rise incident is clear cut, such as connecting to the standpipe and stretching a hoseline down the hall. However, after conducting this drill there were several items that were brought up and needed discussion with the company officers. Some of the items found are discussed below.

The first item that we looked at was simply putting enough of the right equipment on the right floor. This particular scenario had fire showing on the seventh floor with standpipes in each stairwell. The recon team found the fire in the center room of the seventh floor. The first item was humping the hose up to the seventh floor in a timely manner. This feat is simple enough drawing out on a white board, however, is your crew physically capable of completing this task. This may prove to be more taxing than anticipated. This is the same crew that must initiate fire attack.

The second item that was brought to our attention was that the standard one hundred and fifty foot 2 ½" hose lay would make it just short of the center of the structure from either stairwell. By adding an additional fifty foot to the hose we could make it past the center point and reach into the respective rooms. While simply adding the additional hose corrected this the length problem, the extra equipment has to be carried and deployed.

The third item was the actual stretching of the hoseline. We now know the length that we need but how many people and how difficult will it be to stretch the hoseline up to the stairwell above, back down and then out into the hall. Our standard operating procedures state that a minimum of six personnel must be assigned to this task. Another item related to this is how your crew will actually store the extra hose in the stairwell until it is deployed down the hallway. The extra hose can make it difficult to deploy with occupants evacuating and become tripping hazards for occupants and firefighters.

These are just a few of the items that we found that required additional discussion once we put our hands on it. When discussing similar items, we generally leave it to "we will just make it happen if the time comes." Not only is this not practical, it is dangerous and should not be a part of our strategy and tactics manual. This scenario happened to be held inside of a high

rise structure; however it could have been a single family residential structure. This proved to be a very good refresher for some of us and a great learning tool for our new firefighters (which is the majority of our crew). Actually using the tools and practicing the skills will make us proficient and keep us safe. We train because we never know when we will run the call, just as we didn't know that later this same night we were first in at a highrise fire. As always train hard, take care and be safe.

BIO:



BRIAN WARD is an engineer/acting officer with Gwinnett County (GA) Fire Department. He is a past training officer, chairman of the Metro Atlanta Training Officers and currently serves on the Honeywell Advisory Council. He is a State of Georgia Advocate for Everyone Goes Home and the Membership Task Force Co-Chair for ISFSI. Brian was recently awarded the National Seal of Excellence from the NFFF/EGH. He has an associate's degree in fire science and a Fire Safety and Technology Engineering Bachelor's Degree from the University of Cincinnati. He is the founder of FireServiceSLT.com and Georgia Smoke Diver #741.

