



Fire Training Toolbox "Free Training for Firefighters"

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AERIAL CORNHOLE

By: Joe Pronesti

I am sure most of you are familiar with the popular game corn hole; well this is a firehouse variation that will improve your aerial operation skills and will bring some good competition in your firehouse for sure.

If you have an aerial device of any size and type we all have some type of daily, weekly, or monthly check where we put the device into the air. I have seen it done over and over in my career where the firefighters myself included, simply go through the motions of pulling the apparatus out on the ramp put the aerial up swing it around a couple of times, bed it and call it a day. The problem is when we have to put that aerial in the air for a rescue of a civilian or a firefighter will the conditions mimic your front apron of the firehouse? I doubt it.

The materials you need for this game/training is a piece of rope, a tennis ball and a heavy eyebolt screwed through the middle of the ball. Attach the other end of the rope to the aerial tip or bucket and have it hang down about five feet. Next get some traffic cones or buckets and place them on the roof of your station on the ground, wherever your imagination leads you. An even better idea that also incorporates building familiarization is to take your cones or bucket "on the road" to an empty strip mall, apartment building or commercial.

Place your cones on these objects all over and let the fun/training begin. The overall object is to have your operator from your turntable place the weighted ball on top of the cone or into bucket, obviously the tip of the cone will be more of a challenge. Once the ball is on the tip, the operator goes to the next cone. You can time the evolution or simply have your operators take their time and go to each one; again it's up to your imagination

and desires to challenge your crews. No matter what type of aerial you have this game is designed for improving your operators at the turntable have them play this game from there, not the tip of ladder or inside of the bucket. Although difficult to see we utilized our station's antenna guide wire as a "power line" and placed a cone nearby to effect working around charged power lines to perform a rescue. Place a cone on the ground to simulate a one story strip or technical rescue situation.

When I did this for the first time I had one young firefighter when I asked his opinion of the game tell me he didn't get anything out of it except putting the ball on a cone I, didn't do a good enough job of explaining why we were doing this. Don't make my mistake, explain first the need to have competent operators, good aerial operations can be more than just putting the stick up and flowing water! There will come a time where an operator will have to quickly maneuver the aerial device to rescue a civilian or firefighter trapped on a roof or window. In my opinion doing the daily or weekly aerial check on the ramp isn't going to be enough practice to help this operator succeed. Liken it to NFL teams who practice with the speakers blasting crowd noise to help create what they will face in the visitor's stadium on a Sunday afternoon. You got to use some imagination and make training challenging and real. Plus, the competitive juices really start flowing when you have firefighters trying to get the ball on the cone. Try it and see for yourself. It's a quick and easy drill that prepares. I want to thank Platoon Chief Will Anderson of the Euclid, Ohio Fire Department for showing me this drill.



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Have the operator from the turntable get the aerial into position to place weighted ball on the tip of the cone.



Place a cone on the ground to simulate a one story strip or technical rescue situation.



Firefighters love a challenge and competition. Use it to your advantage when training Have FUN and be SAFE!



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