

Bump, Bump, To the Pump

Mike McKay
Firefighter



How many of your departments have a display piece like this hanging on a wall at your firehouse? How many of you would know which way is out if you came across the brass couplings in the dark?

Knowing your couplings and what type of significance the infamous “lugs” mean can save your life, and your crew. A recent fire in my small town made me think real hard about this cheap to build display piece.

Our department was dispatched for a reported structure fire in a mobile home. Shortly after the initial dispatch the chief arrived on scene confirming a working fire in a single wide mobile home. With heavy smoke and fire showing with possible persons trapped. The initial engine company arrived on scene and advanced a 1 ¾ hose line through the front door. At this time interior crew’s encountered thick smoke with heavy fire conditions on the far end of the home. After the incident commander and pump operator noticed an imminent flashover crews quickly made their way to the exit. Shortly after making their decision to back out the far end of the home flashed over, quickly banking down the smoke and temporarily disorientating the crew. All firefighters were able to exit the building safely. However, it made me think about the **“What If”** question. The question obviously being what if they had to rely on their hose line to exit the building? What if they didn’t know which way was out? Fortunately our guys made it out safely. But how many other firefighters have made the ultimate sacrifice to their community for something as simple as studying a hose line? I feel this is something every department career or volunteer should train on frequently. Place the display on a frequently seen wall in your firehouse. Have fun with it, (a lieutenant of mine came up with this one) grab a hose (attach the couplings), pair of gloves, blind fold your partner and quiz him to find his/her way out. It only takes a few minutes.

The trick is, if you’re following your hose line you will find a coupling, if you come to the long (male) lugs first it will lead you towards the fire. If you encounter the short (female) lugs first it will lead you out. My hope is to see these affordable display pieces in stations across the country.

Think of all the injuries, and deaths YOU could prevent.