



Fire Training Toolbox "Free Training for Firefighters"

<http://firetrainingtoolbox.com>

<http://facebook.com/FireTrainingToolbox>

<http://twitter.com/FireTrainingToo>

Company Level Training

Jim McCormack

DISCLAIMER: *Anyone can be mediocre; you do not even have to try! Company training is for those individuals and companies who choose to be above average. If you simply want to be average then stop reading now and go watch TV or take a nap – otherwise, start training every day!*

Company drills should be a part of the daily activities on every fire department – including all stations and all workgroups – but they are not!

For whatever reason, and there is a bunch, company training does not happen as often as it should. More importantly, when it does happen the main objective is to get it over with as quick as possible. The objective should be to learn, or refresh, the material being covered.

Training is not punishment. Most of the time company training is conducted as a reaction to a bad experience – not to learn from the experience but to point out how the company messed up.

It is somewhat funny that every firefighter in every department uses the same descriptive term to describe the first few minutes of every major incident. What is even more amusing is that most of the incidents are not major they are just small incidents that seem big because they do not happen that often. Here is a simple solution – do more training so that things go smoother when the next incident occurs!

Recharging Company Training

We are all in it together! Sure, the company officer is ultimately responsible for the way the company performs but it cannot be done alone. Every member of the company has a stake in how the company operates and should have an equal share of how the company trains.

A simple and effective company-training program begins with a daily training session conducted by a member of the company. It's simple, develop a rotation based on the number of people in the company, on-duty, or however else the department divides the personnel up, and make them responsible for conducting a training session on their assigned day. To ensure success, do not allow any excuses when it is their turn to provide the training!

The Instructor Thing...

There is a tremendous amount of weight placed on a piece of paper that somehow indicates a person is able to relay information to others (instruct, teach, train, etc.). In fact, the first obstacle used to try to derail training efforts is the instructor thing!



Fire Training Toolbox “Free Training for Firefighters”

<http://firetrainingtoolbox.com>

<http://facebook.com/FireTrainingToolbox>

<http://twitter.com/FireTrainingToo>

Firefighters use the excuse that they are not instructors so they cannot provide training – that is their way of getting out of it. Officers or *certified* instructors use the excuse that the firefighters do not meet the standards to be able to provide training. Either way, that’s BS!

The bottom line is that every firefighter should be proficient at performing the basic skills that just might have to be performed during an actual response. That proficiency requires knowledge of how to perform the skills, the physical ability to perform the skills, and the ability to communicate to others what skills may need to be performed. With that said, every firefighter is capable of conducting company level training – whether they are certified or not! In fact, because most companies don’t train the way they should these individuals end up performing training during the actual incident anyway.

Company drills are simply a proactive approach to training and improving fireground performance. Here are a few points to consider when developing a company-training program.

Drill Topics...

They are endless. As a brief review, company drill topics should be based on the following four areas: apparatus, equipment, skills, and responses. They should also include both basic and advanced material.

In addition, company drills should reflect what is needed by the company to increase proficiency. The best way to determine these topics is to review each incident when you get back to the station. Look at what went right and what went wrong, or what could have gone better, and incorporate those things into upcoming drills.

Objectives

Set the objective and keep it simple. For the most part, company drills should focus on maintaining day-to-day proficiency of the skills needed to get the job done. Every now and then new material will have to be introduced but for the most part the company drills should focus on review and refinement of skills. If it is new material then make sure to set aside enough time to learn it. It may take more than one session so plan ahead.

During the company drill, make sure to allow enough time for everyone to get involved. In fact, require that everyone get involved. The only way to review it is to do it – company drills should be interactive!



Fire Training Toolbox "Free Training for Firefighters"

<http://firetrainingtoolbox.com>

<http://facebook.com/FireTrainingToolbox>

<http://twitter.com/FireTrainingToo>

Delivery

Every individual will have their own delivery style but a few parameters should be set up. During each training session, the trainer should give a short overview of the session and review of the basic material.

Keep it simple and keep it short. The whole idea is to get everyone involved – ***don't force your way of thinking on them just force them to think!***

Do something! Require each session to have a hands-on, or interactive, portion. If it is a drill on size up then drive around the district and have everyone, give a size-up of a building. If it is on ground ladders then make everyone raise and carry ladders. Advancing hoselines does not take an actual fire, pull out the apparatus and work on keeping the mess to a minimum when flaking the line. The point is to require everyone to perform the skills!

Critique the session! When it is over review what you did. Have a short wrap-up session after everything is put away. Require everyone in the company to bring up a different point about the material and discuss it.

Length

Keep it short but allow enough time to cover the material. If the material is going to take a long time to cover then break it up into a few shorter sessions. Set a time limit of between 30 to 60 minutes.

Do not drag it out. Present the material, perform the hands-on, clean up, perform a critique and get on with the rest of the day!

Contact information: info@fdtraining.com www.fdtraining.com