



Fire Training Toolbox "Free Training for Firefighters"

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The Basics and Standardization

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We all dread that phrase of "getting back to the basics." However, this is one of the most important items we should all be focusing on to make our operations on the fire ground run smoother. When it comes to training, we focus a large portion of our time on advanced topics. To meet these new objectives our attention to basic skills may suffer or take a back seat to the latest demands. While we should always want to strive for excellence in advanced operations, our true goal is to be first rate at all our functions, so the advanced topics are worth our time. The first question to ask yourself is what are some basics we need to focus on before moving forward? Here are just a few examples of items I have experienced during my fire service career, that can make or break any successful operation.

1. Hose stretches - We must know our hose bed layout, including length, hose size and the way it lays out on the ground when we pull it off the rig. It does not matter what hose load your using, as their are several. What matters is at 3am you can stretch the line into operation without a big pile of spaghetti next to the rig. What matters is that you and your crew can work as a team to make that stretch in a timely matter around obstacles, twists and turns. Another important phase of the hose stretch is making sure you have enough line so that you do not come up short on the fire floor. The only way to become proficient at this is to go out and pull the line, reload it, and pull it, reload it... again and again.



2. Making the hydrant - This seems like such a simple task, but can be a very dangerous one. How are you going to dress the hydrant? Are you just laying a 5-inch line from the steamer to the rig, or are you placing two 2 1/2 or 3" lines off the additional ports? Are you connecting a HUMAT valve or a hydrant assist valve on, or are you hooking directly to the hydrant? This all depends on what your SOGs are and what you are trying to accomplish. Are you using

the hydrant for a primary water supply to the forward pumping Engine or are you using it for tanker shuttle? You will not find in any texty book one single way to make a hydrant. Why? Based on needs, local protocols and the possibility of error, an error that could be tragic.



3. Ladders - Ladders are tools that require a lot of teamwork. When was the last time you had your 35 footer off the rig and practiced throwing it? We must be proficient at throwing ladders. They are our means of egress from upper floors, and provide rescue capabilities for those trapped. Ladders are also very dangerous. They can easily cause injury to us, due to their weight and if not the team does not work together they can be awkward.

4. Power Tools - Know your power tools. How do they start? Do they have a decompression button on them? How do we change the blade or chain? How do we properly fuel them and clean them for the next run? There are so many different saws out there these days. They all have their own little differences. The same goes for PPV fans, the list goes on and on.

5. Hand tools - What are you coming off the rig with? Every Firefighter should have at least some sort of hand tool, a flashlight and one person from the crew should have the TIC. These items should be discussed during your morning rig checks, so that everyone is on the same page. Most importantly do not ever come off the rig empty handed. This includes Investigations, and fire alarms. We need to be prepared for the worst on every run.

These are just a few of the basic items we need to be successful at our job. To be successful we must train within our company or department. We must standardize these operations, so that all members know exactly what to do and how to do. Without standardization, there are hundreds of different ways to complete these tasks. No operation will run smoothly if the members are not all on the same page when performing these tasks. The computer has become a great tool for us in the fire service. It allows us to upload videos into files. This allows us then to go back and watch these videos as a company or department to make sure that all members are performing these skills the same way, every time. Standardization not only makes the operation run smoothly, it also prevents fire ground injuries. Now head out and make a difference in your department. Make your department and crew the best that it can be.