WIND DRIVEN STRUCTURE FIRES

PURPOSE

To establish safe and effective operating procedures for fighting structure fires during high-wind conditions.

PROCEDURE

1. Throughout the work shift:

A. All personnel shall stay informed and be aware of officially issued high wind related watches, advisories and warnings.

2. Risk assessment on arrival:

A. Incident Commander shall include current wind conditions (speed and direction) when conducting a 360 size-up @ structure fires.

B. Incident Commander shall use exterior and interior indicators when determining if dangerous wind-driven structure fire conditions exist, such as:

a) Pulsing fire/smoke from upwind windows

b) Slamming interior and exterior doors

c) “Blowtorch” type horizontal fire behavior

C. Incident Commander shall consider an early defensive attack strategy in wind-driven conditions if:

a) Several rooms are involved in fire

b) All occupants are out, or the rescue possibility is low

c) Structural integrity is compromised and/or active fire in the attic

d) Wind flow paths cannot quickly be controlled (doors and ` windows)

3. Alternate Fireground Tactics:

A. Use the ISO as an external wind “spotter”

B. Use exterior “transitional” fire streams prior to interior fire attack

C. Control wind flow path openings by closing doors, covering windows and other improvised means.

D. Do not use aerial or ground ladders in winds above 30mph.

E. Use caution on the roof when making coordinated ventilation/fire attack.

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KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Wind-driven structure fires can create instantly-changing and lethal interior conditions with very little warning. A comprehensive initial “risk vs. benefit” assessment along with an on-going evaluation of dynamic hazards can significantly reduced the dangers presented to personnel working on the fireground.