

Strip Malls

All efforts must be directed toward confirming Primary Search. It is customary to perform an aggressive fire attack facilitate to rescue. Rescue must be your first priority. If you burn the structure to the ground but you pull out a victim, in our business it is considered a success! Whether you choose to use REVAS or RECEO, by handling the problem you have effectively handled the incident.

- R – Rescue
- E – Exposure
- V – Ventilation
- A – Attack
- S – Salvage

- R- Rescue
- E- Exposure
- C – Confinement
- E – Extinguishment
- O – Overhaul

Strip Malls

The concern with fires in strip malls is that once the fire has penetrated the false ceiling, it will proceed to “run the attic.” The only way to prevent this is a quick initial attack.

While a monitor or deck gun would be effective, it is considered a “cowboy” tactic and is not recommended during a fire simulator. You can accomplish the same concept with a large diameter hand line. If the structure is lightweight or has a common attic (both are probable), there is a good chance you will ultimately be going defensive.

Always begin with a strong size-up.

“Dispatch, Engine 11 is on scene of a working fire in the center unit of a large, single story approximately 15 unit strip mall. Engine 11 has laid in from the hydrant at 4th and Broadway and is pulling a 2 ½ for fire attack on the involved unit.”

Engine 11 will be 3rd Street Command. The Command Post will be in the cab of Engine 11.

“Strike me a 2nd alarm and stage them at 3rd and Lewis.”

Overhead Broadcast:

“All units be advised we have lightweight construction and a large mansard in front of the structure. I expect a common attic.”

First engine lays a supply line and attacks the involved unit with a large diameter hand line. While Primary Search is always the first priority, in a working fire it may not be practical. Taking the BTU's out of the fire is the greatest priority. Laying a supply line provides unlimited water and allows a firefighter to pull a large diameter hand line, flake it in a large circle and sit on it by himself. Lastly, this allows you to stay in Command.

“Paramedics secure utilities and handle RIC functions.”

If you do not have FF/PM's assigned on a working fire you must make other arrangements for RIC.

Second engine lays a supply line. It is very difficult to have an already committed engine pull a supply line well into the incident. It shows the evaluators you did not “forecast” the potential of the incident.

After laying a supply line, second engine pulls a 1 ¾ to one of the exposures. Your decision will be based on:

1. Highest potential (Kidney Dialysis Center, Pool supply)
2. Greatest amount of real estate
3. Greatest likelihood of success

Naming Exposure Groups

Follow your departmental SOP's, SOG's or departmental culture. Exposures can either be labeled as geographical, such as “East Exposure,” or they can be A,B,C,D. The “A” side is always the address, or more specifically, where the numbers are posted over the front door.

If you are given a plot plan of the building prior to entering the exam room make sure to identify the geographical orientation of the building or incident.

“Engine 2 lay a line from the hydrant at Fig and Palm. You have the exposure to the East. You will be “East Exposure group.” Your objectives are: Give me an All Clear on primary, let me know if the fire is in the attic and report on conditions.”

When assigning an engine as an exposure they will be directed to report on the following benchmarks:

- “All clear” on Primary Search
- Fire conditions in the unit
- Fire involvement in the attic

Truck Company assigned to vertically ventilate the roof.

If its lightweight construction, the hole cannot be cut OVER the seat of the fire, as the lightweight roof and fire conditions will lend themselves to early failure. In addition, the roof will not support the weight of the firefighters.

“Truck 11, you are ventilation group. Give me a heat hole as close as possible to the seat of the fire. Be advised we have lightweight construction. If the fire is running the attic I will have you make a strip cut to cut off its progress.”

Third engine will be assigned to “other” exposure.

Engine 3, Main Street Command:

You have the exposure to the West. You will be “West Exposure group.” Your objectives are: Give me an All Clear on primary, let me know if the fire is in the attic and report on conditions.”

Engine 4, Main Street Command

You are RIC (if not already done).

Engine 5, Main Street Command

Take command of my crew and give me an All Clear on the involved unit. (It’s important to remember that at this point your firefighter has been sitting on a large diameter attack line and has not made entry into the involved unit).

You will be Fire Attack (or interior).

If the fire is “running the attic” crews will be directed to obtain a Primary Search, back out of the unit, proceed to the next unit and report on above.

This is continued until the company finds a unit with no involvement. This is where we will make our stand. Companies will be directed to get an all clear on Primary Search and pull ceilings to get a clear shot to the attic.

Confirmed Attic Fire

Once the exposure companies have identified how far the fire has progressed, the decision will be made by the IC as to where to make a stand. It is important to sacrifice time for real estate. Since a coordinated effort takes time, it is important to allot time for the ventilation group on the roof to make a strip cut the length of the roof. While the crews on the roof are cutting a strip to redirect the fire, the engine crews below are keeping the fire from crossing the line with aggressive firefighting.

Keep in mind that legitimate truck work is very labor intensive. A four-person truck will be taxed making a defensive strip cut. It is important to augment them as resources become available. Know your department’s manpower. If you have a four-person truck company but the engineer stays with his or her rig, you only have three people making the cut.

Keep truck companies available for truck work. Augment them with additional truck companies instead of paramedic units or engine companies. If you need to augment truck companies with engine companies, use engines that are housed in truck stations, as they are more familiar with the location and use of the equipment.

*“Truck 11 you are ventilation group. I want a heat hole over the seat of the fire. I am assigning you Engine 11. Coordinate the timing and location of your cut with Interior.”
Since Engine 11 is housed with Truck 1, the natural choice is to augment Truck with Engine 11.*

If your tactics are not working, GET OUT and go defensive. It's not worth risking the lives of your firefighters for a bag of Fritos. Once you have established that there are no victims in the structure; you have an obligation to your people. Don't let your ego get the best of you. Pull the crews out and go defensive. Don't forget to do a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR).

*Interior, Command- Are all you of firefighters accounted for?
Ventilation group, Command – Are all of your firefighters accounted for...*