

IAFC LIAISON ACTIVITY REPORT

THE GUIDE FOR STRUCTURAL FIRE ATTACK NFPA 1700

Name of IAFC Representative: Chief Smokey Dyer (Ret.), Kansas City, Missouri Fire Department

Report Date: March 29, 2019

Committee Meeting: NFPA 1700, Guide for Structural Fire Attack

Meeting Dates and Location: March 19-21, 2019, at the Marriott Hotel at LaGuardia Airport at Queens, New York City, New York

Key Information:

1. This was the second draft meeting concerning the attempt to create the first edition of the Guide for Structural Fire Fighting. One hundred fifty pages of comments were submitted by interested parties concerning the first draft that was prepared by the committee. All submitted “public comments” were considered and responded to by the committee.
2. A controversial “public comment” that was submitted for the committee’s consideration concerned vertical ventilation being eliminated as a recommended tactic within the document. The hazards of fire fighters being on the roof of structures was discussed extensively by the committee. It was pointed out that vertical ventilation can include several operations that do not involve individuals being on a roof where a fire is burning below them. This includes opening up a stairwell at the top of a shaft within a high-rise building, opening up skylights at certain structures, utilizing roof ventilation fans, and etc. The committee voted to retain vertical ventilation as a tactic that should be considered by an incident commander and a risk versus gain analysis should be conducted.

3. Another issue that was debated thoroughly involved positive pressure attack (PPA). This is a tactic where a fan (blower) is directed to pressurize a flow path during a phase on the incident when the fire has not been controlled. Those who supported the motion discussed that there are too many unknowns involving this tactic, and the over-pressurization of a fire compartment could result in a “wind-driven fire” and the fire “rolling-over” the hose line team and blocking their escape from the compartment or burning their hose line in-two. Others pointed out that the fire research had disclosed that in some cases, PPA can be successful in fire control evolutions. The decision was made by the committee to keep PPA as a tactic within the document. There was no controversy concerning the utilization of positive pressure ventilation (PPV) as a tactic to remove smoke and fire gases after a fire is controlled.

4. A proposal was submitted to the committee to in some ways limit other tactics other than water application until the fire was controlled. In other words, there would be no recommended significant attempt to initiate search and rescue activities, conduct ventilation, or perform other tasks until the fire was “knocked-down.” This proposal was rejected by the committee. The committee felt strongly that all tactics should be available for the incident commander’s consideration, and that it is the duty of the incident commander to coordinate the various tactics in order to bring about a successful outcome.

5. A public comment was received to have the document recommend only solid bore nozzles and to recommend that adjustable spray (fog) nozzles should not be utilized in structural fire control operations. The researchers reported that straight stream or narrow spray pattern is the best for water application from the exterior or for “cooling smoke” or the surfaces within structure. They also pointed out that the movement of a solid bore nozzle brings about the

nearly identical outcomes as the use of a spray nozzle. The decision was made not to eliminate the consideration of fog nozzles and not to recommend one type of nozzle over another.

6. There are no additional meetings scheduled for the committee prior to the first edition of NFPA 1700 being published and released. If there is no NITMAM (Notice of Intent to Make a Motion) submitted for the NFPA's Annual Meeting, the publication should be out in November, 2019. If a NITMAM is submitted, it will be 2020 before the document is published.

Recommendation for IAFC Board of Directors: There is no recommendation for the IAFC Board of Directors at this time. Following the release of the first edition, it may be good for the IAFC Board of Directors to pass a resolution requesting that all departments take a strong look at the NFPA 1700 Guide and determine if they should implement the recommendations within their standard operating procedures involving structural fire attack. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Name of Organization that Funded this Trip: I personally fund my participation in the representation of the IAFC on this committee. I consider it an honor, as a former IAFC president, to represent the association and the fire service on this committee. Chief Jeff Grote of the Central Jackson County Fire Protection District of Blue Springs, Missouri is my alternate. The CJCFPD funds Chief Grote's participation on this committee.

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