



# Lauderdale-By-The-Sea Volunteer Fire Department

<b>S.O.G. Number: 600</b>	<b>Effective Date: October 1, 2010</b>
<b>Section: 602</b>	
<b>Subject: Fire ground Search and Rescue</b>	
<b>By Order of the Fire Chief: Steven Paine</b>	

## Section 602: Fire ground Search and Rescue

**Purpose:** To establish tactical and strategic guidelines to be executed during emergency situations requiring the search for victims during fire suppression operations of a structure.

**Scope:** Guidelines pertain to all Lauderdale by the Sea Fire Department personnel performing primary/secondary searches of the structure during fire emergencies.

### **Policy:**

To conduct a proper search for victims requires skill both on the fire floor and the floor above. It is Lauderdale by the Sea Fire Department policy that at no times should searches or any other interior fire ground operation or evolution be attempted with less than two firefighters.

1. Firefighters must stay low, not only to maximize whatever visibility may remain in an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) environment, but also to remain below the more dangerous high heat.
2. Smoke conditions will frequently make it necessary for firefighters to rely on their sense of touch. A utility or search rope tied to the doorknob of a door may be used as a guideline when searching large areas or as a means of maintaining orientation.
3. Use the Thermal Imaging Camera to assist in all search and rescue efforts.
4. Part of the size-up process is being aware of the resident(s) of the structure and the time and day of the week. Ask neighbors, family members, standby, if residence is occupied. If so, ask for last known place victim(s) was/were, if known. This will indicate who is likely to be in a house or apartment at a given time. Firefighters must also be sensitive to typical behavioral patterns of different age groups in a fire. Children may hide in closets or under beds, while the elderly are frequently found taking refuge in the bathtub or shower stall. Firefighters must be aware that removal of draperies or curtains and moving large objects or furniture may be necessary, as they may hide a victim, sealed-off closet, or other areas being used for refuge.



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5. Victims are frequently located near the door or other areas of egress, such as the front door, interior stairways, or balcony access doors. As they will usually try to reach a means of evacuation, they are often found behind and around the entrance door, which is where a room search should commence. Firefighters will enter the room and behind the entrance door will be searched first for possible victims. After a quick check of this area using the pattern determined by the Lieutenant or Acting Officer, the room or apartment search can begin.
6. After the primary search of the room or apartment, the team shall report to the Incident Commander immediately.
7. If after a reasonable amount of time no communications are made or established with search team, Incident Commander will immediately order a Rapid Intervention Team into the structure to locate. There may be a possibility that the search team may be in trouble and require assistance.
8. With the assistance of the Thermal Imaging Camera, thorough searches, both primary and secondary, are required on all floors above the fire as well, because products of combustion and fire spread will rise and mushroom on the upper floors. Public hallways and the entire staircase up to the roof must be examined as soon as possible for those civilians who unsuccessfully attempted to use the interior stairs. Firefighters should vent as they go as to make the interior of the structure bearable for trapped victims and firefighting personnel alike while improving visibility.
9. If for any reason a thorough search of an area has not been completed, then the Lieutenant or Acting Officer must be informed and a carefully executed follow-up search be initiated. Search for life shall not be confined to the structure alone. The perimeter of the building and other areas must be checked for victims who may have jumped or fallen.
10. Secondary searches must be conducted as soon as conditions permit. Secondary searches shall be conducted in the same manner as listed above. It is recommended, however, that a different team of firefighters conduct the secondary searches.
11. When a victim is found, immediate notification must be made to the supervising Lieutenant, Acting Officer, or to the Incident Commander. The victim must be removed from the structure by both firefighters conducting the search. A firefighter must never be left alone within a structure. The rescuing firefighters exiting the structure must immediately inform the Incident Commander exact location that the search was ended in the recovery of the found victim. A possibility still exists of more victims within the same room and the room, along with any remaining unsearched rooms, will have to be searched further.



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12. Coordination is imperative when conducting both primary and secondary searches. The objective is to locate any trapped people and to get to the most severely endangered in the shortest time period. Duplication of efforts wastes precious time.
  
13. While conducting a search, if you come across a non-viable victim the victim shall remain as found and not disturbed. The crew officer shall notify the incident commander of the victim's viability and location. (i.e. 1 victim not viable in room 511 bathroom)