

Commack Fire Department

CFD Probationary Firefighter Basic Lesson Plan

Topic: Search / V.E.I.S

Class #: 14 & 15

- **Level of Instruction**
 - Probationary Firefighter
- **Equipment Needed**
 - SCBA per student
 - Irons
 - 6' hook
 - Can
 - T.I.C.
 - 24' extension ladder
 - Search rope
- **Resources Needed**
 - CFD Probationary manual
 - CFD SOG's
- **Terminal Objective**
 - Firefighter's will demonstrate proficiency in searching, victim locating and victim removal through a series of different scenarios with 100 % accuracy.
- **Enabling Objectives**
 - Firefighter will explain what the responsibilities of the 1st and 2nd due truck companies are
 - Firefighter will understand riding positions, assignments and tool selection
 - Firefighters will demonstrate how to properly search
 - Firefighters will demonstrate how to Vent from a ladder during VEIS
 - Firefighters will demonstrate how to sweep the floor with a tool during VEIS
 - Firefighter will demonstrate how to locate the door and isolate during VEIS
 - Firefighter will demonstrate how to bring victim to window for removal during VEIS
- **Lesson Outline:**
 - Search
 - Preserving life is always top priority
 - Search Statistics
 - Highlight where majority of victims are located
 - Highlight how many firefighters it takes for removal
 - Who searches?
 - 1st due ladder companies
 - Fire floor to the seat of the fire
 - Victims
 - 2nd due ladder companies
 - Floor above or adjacent to
 - As per O.I.C.

- Critical areas of search order
 - Most severely threatened by fire and up and our
- Size up
 - Identify from the street
 - Understanding common layouts
 - Identifying from windows
- Primary search
 - Quick, aggressive yet systematic search for salvageable victims and fire
 - Primary search location order
 - Most threatened by fire
 - Every area gets a primary search!
- Secondary search
 - Conducted after the situation is under control and primaries are done
 - Not to be confused with second due responsibilities
 - A second due ladder is doing a PRIMARY search even though it might be the top priority area to search
- Search Crews
 - Everyone should be equipped with a radio and flashlight at a minimum
 - Inside team
 - Officer- (T.I.C, mini- Halligan, search rope)
 - Irons- (flat headed axe and Halligan)
 - Can- (6' Hook and 2-1/2 gallon water can)
 - Outside team
 - Outside Vent –(6' Hook, Halligan, 24' extension ladder)
 - Roof – (Saw, 6' hook, Ladder)
 - Chauffeur – (aerial/tower ladder, entry or ventilation tools)
- Search Positions-
 - Hands and Knees
 - Pros and Cons
 - Foot out (beggars/scoot)
 - Pros and Cons
- Search Techniques
 - Left hand lead and Right hand lead
 - Carrying tools
- Sweeping the room
 - Checking behind the door
 - Sweeping for windows and doors
 - Keeping a mental not of what you come across for egress
 - Using leg to extend off of wall
 - using tools to extend further off the wall
 - Using tools to sweep
 - Into open space
 - Under dead space like furniture or beds
 - Getting off the walls allows you to be more proficient in you search
 - Do not make a mess of the room by throwing furniture

- Victim removal
 - Get done as fast as possible
 - Many techniques not a single one that is right
 - Wrist lock drag
 - Crossed leg
 - Carry
 - Over the knee
 - Considerations for staircases
 - Search in immediate vicinity when you locate a victim
 - Likely that a second victim is nearby
 - Verbalize to your partner that you found a victim
 - Do not keep it to yourself
 - Communicate to command that you found a victim
 - Let them know where you plan to take them out
 - GET MOVING AS FAST AS POSSIBLE
- VENT, ENTER, ISOLATE, SEARCH
 - Venting
 - Be ready to go prior to venting
 - Remember once you vent the clock starts for the flow path, need to get in and close that door
 - Make a radio communication to command before you dump in
 - Enter
 - Sweep the floor and sound
 - Hook tool and bail in head first
 - Isolate
 - Get to the door as fast as possible
 - Knowing basic floor plans help you get to the door
 - Doors are usually in the middle of the house head in that direction when you get into room
 - Don't search attached to the walls
 - Sweep hallway and then close door
 - Conditions should start to improve
 - Search
 - Start to head back to window while searching
 - Once you locate a victim make the proper communications
 - Bring victim to window and orient for removal
 - Feet to sill
 - Lift upper body up and over into sill and FF out on ladder
- Tips and Tricks
 - Inward opening doors (bed and bathrooms)
 - Outward opening doors (closets and basements)
 - Dressers might be used as cribs
 - Adults and dogs flee, kids and cats hide
 - Ladders might be faster
 - Do not spend time in unlikely areas

- **Summary**

- Search all starts with size up. Understanding building construction and layout can play a huge part in a good search. We use size up and prior knowledge of common layouts to aid us in our search but when the lights go out and its zero visibility you need to always come back to the search basics that you are going to be taught. That's what keeps us safe and avoids us getting into a bad situation. Expect the unexpected, people do some whacky things, you don't want to get sucked into the fact that a window or a door SHOULD be there. Always follow the SOG's, if there are changes that need to be made let command make those decisions. Remember what the goal of our searches are, fire and victims, victims being the top priority. Always keep in mind that those *seconds aren't your, they are theirs*, so move with a purpose, assess, process information, adapt and overcome. Practice your searches, practice carrying tools, practice your drags. Practice it all and as often as possible.



COMMACK FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING DIVISION



Introduction

In the fire service search is such a vast topic, we might be searching for fire, for victims, for egress, and sometimes we search for lost or injured firefighters. Each have their own tactical approaches and considerations and by the time you are done with your probationary classes we are going to have covered them all. However, for this class we are going to focus on the big two, *locating fire and victims*. The basics that you learn here will give you the foundation to do any other type of search you need to do. In this segment we are going to look at the basics of search starting with who does the search depending on assignment, the difference between primary and secondary searches and of course search techniques.

Preserving life must always be our top priority, even if it isn't done first. There are situations where the fire must be controlled first causing a delay in effecting a rescue. The "Go or No Go" decision is a whole other topic within and really comes down to individual experience, knowledge and a risk vs reward assessment. Either way, we must always come back to the highest priority: life preservation. The only way we know a building is vacant is by conducting a search and verifying that it is empty ourselves. Why? Well here are the stats:

- 67% of rescues someone alerted crews that people were inside
- 28% of rescues there was no report whatsoever
- **5% of rescues there was a report of "everyone was out of the building"**

Look at that last stat! Let's think about that. You show up and you get a report that everyone is out, no life preservation to worry about so naturally you are going to relax. What happens? You get in there, find the seat of the fire, report to command and continue on your search. But the initial report is that "all victims are out", so your search becomes lazy, no urgency, no method. Until all of a sudden, we find the boyfriend on the couch that dad didn't know fell asleep during a movie or the basement tenant who was supposed away for the weekend is in his room. **We never rely solely on reports, expect victims, conduct your searches the same every time, with the same urgency and same purpose.**

Search and Rescue Statistics

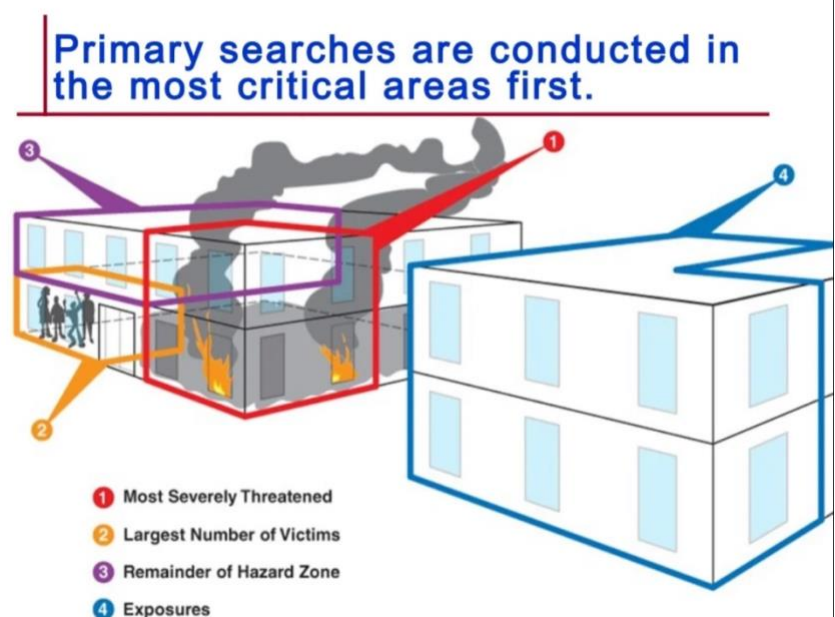
Before we get into the meat and potatoes of search it's important that we take a look at some more statistics. Don't worry, you are not going to be tested on these stats, this is meant to set the tone for your understanding of how important search is. You are going to see that there is a method to the madness when we search, we target certain areas, we search with purpose. You are going to hear this through your training and throughout your fire career, ***"those are not your seconds, they are theirs"***. What's this mean exactly? Civilians don't stand a chance of survival unless you can get to them in that small timeframe where they can survive the conditions. So how do we make sure we don't waste time? We do smart, quick targeted primary searches into areas that we might find people. This among some other things that will be discussed later on give them a fighting chance of survival.

- Average Family = 5.3 people
 - Takes a minimum of 2 rescuers to remove 1 adult
 - Means 8-10 rescuers for removal and continued search for an average family size
 - Must get to them within 2 to 5 minutes or they may die
- 35% of civilian fire deaths were in the process of attempting to escape
 - Doorways, hallways, windows
- 33% of civilian fire deaths never wake up
- 22% of civilian fire fatalities are unable to act, even though they are aware of the fire
 - Invalids, infants, handicapped
- 3-5% of civilian fire fatalities occur while trying to save others
 - Parents trying to save a child
- Most of the remainder are from irrational acts
 - Hiding in a bathtub
- 90% of civilians are found in two locations
 - Bedrooms
 - Exit paths

Who Searches?

By our Standard Operating Guidelines, the first and second arriving truck companies (or acting truck companies) are responsible for search. However, any team of 2 or more firefighters equipped with radios and tools can be ordered to complete a search. Don't get too attached to the thought that you aren't going to be conducting a search just because you belong to an "Engine Company" or that you happen to be riding on an Engine that day. We always start by following the SOG's but assignments often change. Remember, we aren't running out of fully staffed houses with 3 Engines and 2 Ladders all rolling out at the same time to every reported structure fire. Depending on the response, the Incident Commander might inform an Engine Crew that they are now "the Second Due Truck", so be ready! It happens and it happens often. We always have to be ready to switch gears within seconds. This is why it's important to commit to memory what every assignment is when it comes to structure fires. In Referencing SOG's numbers 14 and 15 (response to Signal 13's – Residential, Commercial and Industrial) here is how this should work in regard to search.

- First Due Ladder crew
 - Inside team will provide forcible entry and search to the seat of the fire.
 - Complete search of the fire floor
- Second Due Ladder crew
 - Inside team will provide forcible entry and search of the floor above
 - Or adjacent to depending on building type and layout



Search Considerations

This is all going to start with our SOG's. we should be asking ourselves these questions in this order:

- 1- What's our assignment?
 - a. 1st due
 - b. 2nd due
 - c. Additional search team in a targeted area given by Incident Commander
- 2- Where are we supposed to be searching?
 - a. Seat of the fire
 - b. Floor above
 - c. Specific area given by Incident Commander
- 3- Victims?
 - a. Confirmed
 - b. Unknown

By first understanding our assignment we hopefully know what floor we are going to. Depending on the fire we might not, we might just have a lot of smoke showing and not necessarily know where the fire is.

Regardless, it's the first dues responsibility to force entry and search to the seat of the fire. Through size up, reading smoke and other techniques we should have a methodical plan of where we are forcing entry and where we are headed once inside the structure.

Whether we know where the fire is or not get in the habit of quickly interviewing people while you are walking up. You will be surprised how people won't say anything unless they are directly asked. I'm not saying sit down with a sketchbook and a cup of coffee but as you are approaching the building, doing your size up and about to mask up, call out to people who might be on the front lawn. Ask them "anyone inside?", "where is the fire?". If they have something for you get the exact location. If its at night "where do they sleep" if its day "where were they last". Have them point it out, don't go based off of "up the stairs 3rd door on the right", remember that and use it but if you get a visual that it's the 2/3 corner, between the two pieces of information you have a really good idea of where you are headed.

The last thing is the question of *victims*? this is the one that always throws people for a loop. Now this is a basic search class designed for probationary members, so I am not going to get into too much further as it relates to considerations as far as effecting rescues go. As mentioned earlier, rescue decisions that break the normal search order as far as it relates to the SOG's is dependent on the experience and judgement of the rescuers. But I will say this so that way you have a general idea in case you are starting to look ahead and wonder what the right decision would be if there is a confirmed report of occupants within.

- There are two ways of looking at this:
 - Many feel that getting to the seat of the fire needs to be done first. The idea behind this is that you might be able to do something, close the door or use a can to knock it back. From there you search back. Plus anyone near the fire is in the greatest danger and has the least amount of time
 - The other thought is that you begin your search as soon as you enter the structure and go room by room as long as you fire conditions allow you to.

Each school of thought is valuable and has its place. A lot more goes into the decision-making process than just hitting the panic button because someone says, "occupants within". All bets can't be off just because we hear those words, we also need to think about where we are committing our firefighters and the need to get water on the fire. As the great Andy Fredericks said "more lives are saved at fires by a properly positioned hose line, than by any other life saving techniques available to firefighting" while this might be a search class,

remember what was said that the beginning, **preserving life must always be our top priority**. Getting a handline in place is always a great solution no matter what. This might not be possible unless you have a search team who finds the fire for you. Your second search team can always be given a specific assignment to search for occupants. These decisions should fall on the shoulders of our Chiefs and Officers, it's one of the reasons why we elect them.

Size up: When it comes to residential private dwellings, learn the layouts especially in your first due area. We have a lot of the same house types throughout our district. For the most part the footprint of those individual types are the same within each neighborhood unless of course they have been renovated. Let's go back to our stats, the majority of victims are found in

bedrooms. With that in mind, start to be able to identify houses from the street. That way when its 3 o'clock in the morning and there a report of victims trapped in a 2-story high ranch you are able to identify by the windows where the bedrooms are. From prior knowledge of a high ranch and from looking at the picture to the right I am able to identify from the street that on the second floor the bedrooms are to the left. I am able to identify this based off of the bow window on the right, typically you will not find a bow window in a bedroom, that is more of a living room or dining room window. Furthermore, my prior knowledge tells me that there should be a staircase upon entry from the front door leading up and down. So in through the front door, up the stairs and to the left is where the bedrooms are going to be located

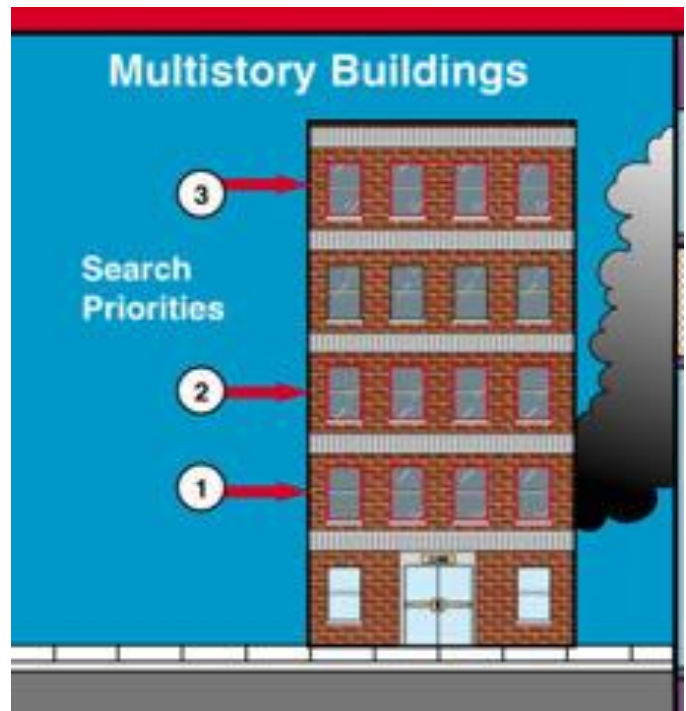


Primary Search

A quick, aggressive yet systematic search for salvageable victims and fire. Remember: Life preservation is our top priority so this search should be initiated and completed before or during fire suppression, if possible. The priority order of primary search locations follows this order:

- Fire floor
- Floor above the fire
- Remaining upper floors
- Lower floors
- Other areas including but not limited to balconies, rooftops and adjacent structures.

The primary search within the above-mentioned locations encompasses the areas most exposed to the fire but not involved with fire, as we really don't expect to find salvageable victims in the actual fire room. If fire is located during a search it is up to the search team to attempt to isolated and contain the fire. They can do this by closing a door or using the water-can to hold it.



Additionally, they need to communicate the location of the fire to command and ensure that the engine company is able to locate and get the hose line to the seat of the fire.

Keep in mind that not only one crew will be responsible for completing all of the search locations in the above listed order at a working fire. If conditions allow, multiple search teams might be completing searches of locations lower on the priority list simultaneously while other, earlier arriving crews search higher priority areas.

- As an example: As per our SOG's. if we respond to a working structure fire of a 2-story private dwelling with fire on the first floor, our first due truck is going to the fire floor. If the second due truck is there in a timely manner, they will be going to the floor above. Chances are the search on the second floor will start prior to the crew on the first floor completing theirs. So now our top two search locations are fulfilled by 2 different crews. This is where communication with command becomes important. Once the first due fulfills their search responsibilities they need to radio to command "primaries on the first floor are complete" and await direction from command. Command is responsible for knowing what resources are doing what so they should be able to tell you where your services are needed next. In a worst-case scenario, you follow the priority order listed above until told otherwise by command.

Secondary Search

Is typically conducted after the situation is under control and conditions improve. A secondary search is not completed until all areas of the building are accounted for and a primary search is completed in those areas. Secondary searches are typically done by different crews than those who conducted the primary search in that location. This is because usually if you search an area you are going to have a tendency of searching it the same way the second time around. This is a problem because if you missed something the first time you are probably going to miss it the second time. The idea of "fresh eyes" allows a new crew to come in who might search the area different thus making it a more thorough and completed search.

Do not get secondary searches confused with first and second due responsibilities. All areas get a primary search done followed by a secondary. Using the same example as above and in accordance to our SOG's: if you are a second due truck company the interior team is going to search the floor above. **This search is considered a PRIMARY SEARCH of the second floor.** You will be doing this simultaneously with the first due truck company while they do a PRIMARY of the fire floor (first floor).

Search Crews

We already established that truck companies are primarily going to be responsible for searching, but what positions are doing what? To understand this better we must first grasp what riding positions are part of the truck company. If manpower supports it, the truck company consists of 6 riding positions; Officer, Irons, Can, OV, Roof, Chauffeur. In the perfect scenario at a working fire the Truck company is divided into two teams: an inside team and an outside team. Below are the positions with the tools they should be taking at a minimum. Keep in mind that in addition to the tools listed below each member should be carrying a working flashlight and radio.

- Inside team
 - Officer
 - Thermal Imaging Camera
 - Mini halligan/Officers tool
 - Search Rope (commercial)
 - Irons position
 - Irons (flat-headed axe and halligan)

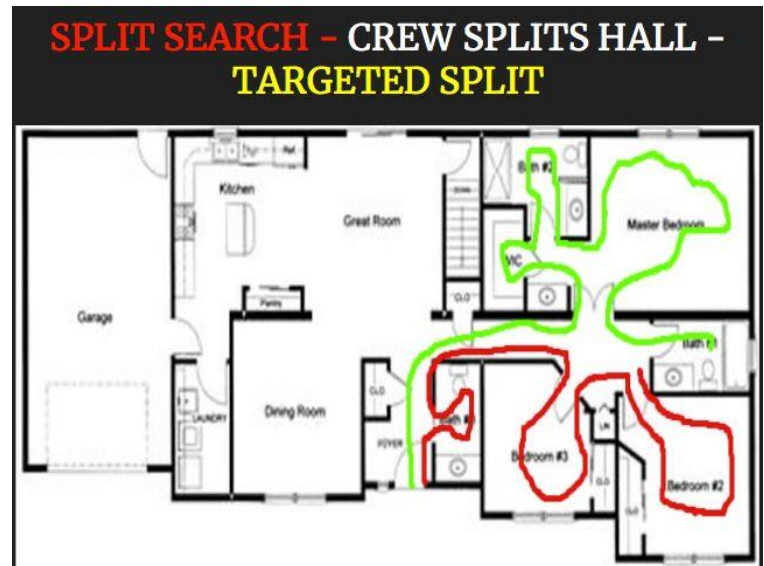
- Can position
 - 2-1/2 Gallon water can
 - 6' Hook
- Outside team
 - Outside Vent
 - 24' Extension ladder
 - 6' Hook
 - Halligan
 - Roof Position
 - Saw
 - 6' hook
 - Chauffeur
 - Aerial ladder/tower ladder
 - Entry or ventilation tools depending on assignment

Inside Team: As you can imagine the inside team makes entry into the building and conducts searches depending on arrival in conjunction with the SOG's or by the incident commander's orders. For the most part this **3-person team will move through the structure together but individually search separate areas as they progress in order to cover the most ground in the least amount of time.** This might be tough to understand without doing it but imagine this as an example and use the picture to the right as a reference:

- The inside team (Officer, Irons, Can) of Truck 1 enters a structure to conduct a primary search they make it to the second floor landing where they begin to head down a long hallway. As the team gets to a door, one member (irons or can) enters and conducts a search of that room (purple line) while the other member continues down the hallway for the next searchable room (green line). In the meantime, the officer (red line) remains in the hallway and utilizes, their TIC, flashlight and voice to continue to have visual and voice contact of the crew members who are searching. In other words, the officer remains oriented, knowing which way is out in case conditions deteriorate and the crew needs to egress from the structure. Once they are done with the search of that room they enter back into the hallway and head to the next room/area that needs to be searched. Not only is the officer keeping an eye on the other two, maintaining an egress plan but they are also accounting for which rooms are already searched so the same room isn't searched twice on the primary.
- As mentioned earlier, a search team consists of 2 or more people so in the event there are only 2 members teamed up to search they can do this in a number of different ways. No single way is correct, each have their place, that decision comes from individual experience and can be dictated by the situation.



- One person could maintain “orientation” by staying out in a hall while the other conducts searches of areas
 - Safest in terms of egress
 - Slow
- Can each search separate areas
 - Fastest in terms of coverage
 - Separation can lead to a loss of orientation
 - *Reference picture to the right*
- Can search together
 - Slowest
 - Not ideal for small rooms



Outside Team: This might be confusing to some, but the outside team is not always all exterior.

- **Outside Vent:** While one of the primary objectives of the OV is to provide ventilation from the exterior they are also tasked with VEIS (ventilation, enter, isolation and search). VEIS is a topic within itself but lets focus on the “S” (Search) for now. When it comes to VEIS the OV will locate a survivable space that is not occupied by fire and get in there and search.
- **Roof Position:** This is often a position that gets cut out, for instance, in a basement fire of a 2-story private dwelling we don’t need people cutting vent holes on the roof. So many times if we do happen to need the roof man on the roof they will team up with the OV and assist in their tasks which again could involve VEIS. If not they might team up with other truck company roof men and report to command forming another interior search team.
- **Chauffeur:** While the chauffeur is responsible for proper apparatus placement and operating the tower ladder or aerial device there might be times in which they might have to enter the structure and search. If you are on the turntable there might be a victim that presents themselves at a window or maybe there is a late report of a victim in a certain room, as a chauffeur you might be performing a VEIS off the aerial. Additionally, if you don’t need to operate your apparatus because it’s not within the reach of the building you might be reporting to command and becoming part of another search team that is going to an area designated by the incident commander

Search Positions

In this portion we are going to discuss the different ways of how we physically orient ourselves to conduct a search. There are a few schools of thought here, you have some who say to be on your hands and knees, you have others who say to search on one knee with the other leg out front (Beggars crawl/Scoot) similar to how you would advance a hose line, then you have the old school duck walk people (we won’t be covering this). Everyone has their own personal opinion, throughout training and your career you will figure out what works the best for you. For some, you might use a combination of them depending on the search you are conducting.

Another consideration when it comes to search positions are tools. Carrying tools is a bigger deal than one might think and there are a few configurations you can be operating within. The inside team is going to

consist of an Officer (TIC and mini halligan), Irons position (flat-headed axe and halligan) and Can position (6' hook and water Can). Additionally, the OV position (6' hook and halligan) will also be involved in a search if they successfully VEIS. As you can imagine, its not the easiest thing to crawl through a house with a 6' hook and a water can. While there are different techniques to searching with tools that might help it's still challenging and might have an effect on which position you choose to search in.

- Hands and knees

- Pros

- Keeps you oriented in the direction they are traveling.
- Stay lower to the floor where temperatures are lower.
- Distributes weight over a larger area
- Allows you to reach out and cover a large area



- Cons

- Head is usually Infront of your hands so you have a tendency to smash your head often
- Head is down so if there is any visibility/TIC you are looking at the floor not forward
- Tough to stop your momentum if you come across stairs or a burnt-out area of floor
- Not the fastest way to search

- Foot out (Beggars/Scoot)

- Pros

- Allows you to move fast
- Foot first allows you to feel for obstructions, staircases, holes etc.
- Keeps your head up so if there is any visibility/TIC you are looking forward
- Body is upright making it easier and thus more frequent sweeps of the walls for doors and windows
- Level with areas like couches and beds where are must search areas



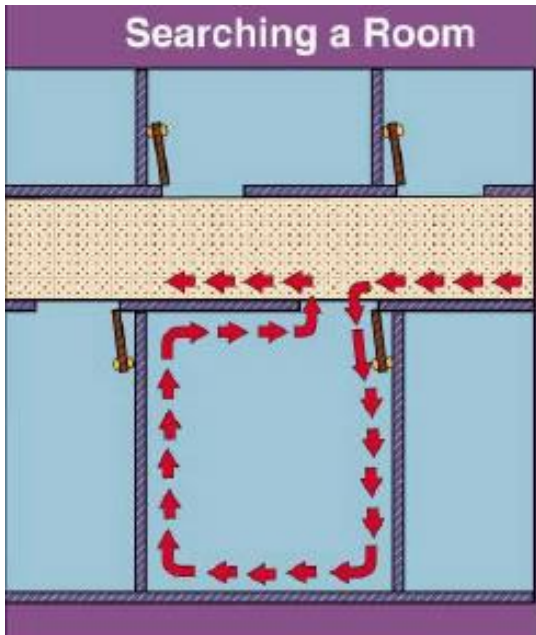
- Cons

- Easy to get turned around
- Head is up higher meaning more heat
- Still have to dive down on your belly to sweep out (bigger movement=more energy)
- Sometimes moving too fast makes you miss things

Its all about practice, practice different techniques in different situations. Searching one way in a nice open area might be fine but throw in some furniture and two tools and it's a whole other story, that search position might not work there. You might be the guy who zips down a hallway on one knee feeling for doors and then when you get to the bedroom switch over to a hands and knees style search, there's nothing wrong with that as long as our searches are being conducted thoroughly and in a timely manner to give our victims the chance of survival that they deserve.

Search Techniques

When it comes to searching the normal technique is to either take what called a "left hand lead" or a "right hand lead". What this basically means is that when you enter into a structure/room that you pick a direction to go to. The direct that you pick is the **side** of your body that is going to remain oriented to that wall. So if

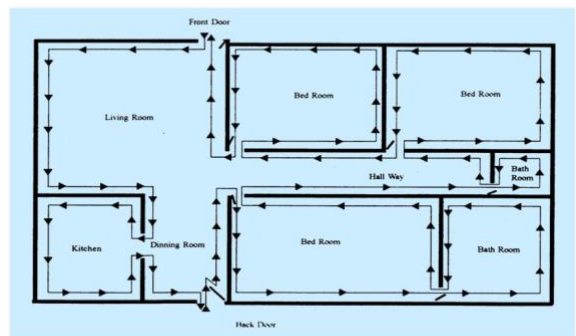


you look at the picture, the arrows indicate that the searching member was heading down the hall against the left side and entered into a room on a "LEFT HAND LEAD". As you can imagine the arrows indicate the direction of travel, so as that firefighter searches that room, their LEFT SIDE is running along that wall until get go through the entire room and back out to where the entered. Furthermore, this helps keep orientation once they enter back into the hall, by remaining on a "left hand lead" they will ensure that they will continue into the direction that has not been searched yet. If for some reason you need to turn back and exit you simply turn your body completely around 180 degrees, now making it a "right hand lead" and you are headed towards the exit or at least from the direction that you came from. Now before we go any further, let's just draw attention to the fact that it was noted as "SIDE". Many schools of thought when it comes to searching techniques state that the firefighter should always have their **HAND** on the wall. Its where the term "left- or right-HAND lead" comes from.

You are going to see by the end of this chapter and your hands-on training that keeping a hand on the wall really inhibits your ability to search the entire room. Later on we are going to discuss ways of maintaining contact with the wall in other ways and also discuss about getting yourself off the walls to search larger areas without completely losing orientation of where you are. Since this is the case get used to hearing "side" being synonymous with "hand".

Its not all about just picking a wall and going with it, you need to recognize where you are when you are searching. If you pick a right hand lead and never take the right side of your body off the wall you are basically just going to go in a big circle and eventually come out (reference picture to the right). Yes, you will have searched the entire floor but is that the most effective? What are we searching for? Fire and Life. We want to target different areas based off of where we are within our search. Sometimes this involves switching back and forth depending on

RIGHT HAND WALL SEARCH



where we need to search.

So up until this point we have covered potential searching positions and our basic technique which gives us a good foundation to now talk about how we are going to efficiently search a room. For the sake of learning purposes, we are going to stick with searching a bedroom. Think about your own homes, usually a bedroom in a home in our area is in the range of 8' x 10' to somewhere around 12' x 14' or maybe a little bigger. This might seem large but throw in some furniture and that room really becomes a tight space. Keep in mind that the open space becomes smaller, but the entire footprint remains the same. We still need to search the entire footprint of it, and this is when technique really becomes important to ensure we are thoroughly searching in order to hit all of the "dead space" within that room. For this size room it only takes one firefighter to search. If you put two firefighters in this spaces the only thing that you are going to find is each other. In larger spaces when two firefighters are searching together it is important to keep verbal contact if you are in the same room searching in different directions and contact by touch if you are both traveling together. If you are traveling together the second firefighter should always try to maintain a hand on the first firefighters foot as they progress.

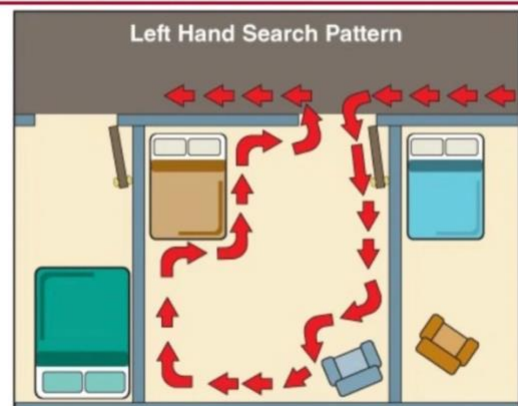
Tools: We are going to revisit and dive a little deeper into techniques for carrying tools. As was mentioned earlier, carrying tools brings in a whole new dynamic and complications to searching. Keeping your tools with you is a necessary evil, we carry them for a specific reason, and we don't want to be caught without them. So, the question becomes, how do we efficiently search with 2 tools? The simple answer is we don't and here is where it can start to become confusing. Whenever we are in a structure we are technically always **"searching"** but there are certain times when we are just *"moving towards an area to be searched"*.

Whenever we are *"moving towards an area to be searched"* is a time when we should have both of our tools. Once we get to that searchable/targeted area and are about to conduct that quick, aggressive, systematic search of that space is a time when we can drop a tool. Let's go back and think of a hallway. A hallway is a pretty tight space, typically 3'-4' in width. This a manageable size that you are going to completely occupy while you move down it and really shouldn't miss anything along the way. Traveling down a hallway can be thought of as *"moving towards and area to be searched"*. Whichever position you decide to navigate down a hallway, this should include you carrying all of your tools based on your assignment. Keep in mind that as you move you still need to feel the walls for doors or entrances into other areas. Some firefighters like to carry a tool in each hand and sweep the walls with the lighter of the two tools, others like to try to carry both tools in one hand and use their free hand to sweep. Everyone finds their own technique into doing this so there really isn't a right or a wrong way of carrying your tools.

- Irons: Flat-headed axe and halligan.
 - Can marry them together and carry in one hand
- Can: 6' hook and 2.5 gallon water can.
 - Can grab the hook end and water can strap in one hand
- OV: 6' hook and halligan
 - Can marry together and carry in one hand

Back to our scenario, we hit our first doorway which is a bedroom, this is now an area that we need to **enter and search**. If you can imagine and by looking at the picture to the right, trying to search with 2 tools in a tight bedroom becomes a problem and

General methods for primary and secondary searches follow a systematic pattern.



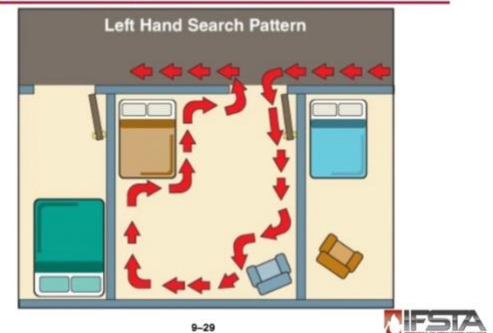
9-29



not effective. So typically, one of your tools will be left at the door that you entered into and you will take the other one to assist in your search. The tool that you decide to leave at the door is something that is preference and based off of individual experience. Whichever tool you decide to leave should be left at the door you enter, perpendicular to the doorway. By leaving it oriented this way you it gives you the best chance of running into it once your search of that area is complete. You'd be surprised how easily a 6' hook can get lost if you lay it parallel along the wall. Don't forget that fire conditions might make it necessary to close that door once you get in there. By leaving that tool in an identifiable place, you are going to know you search is complete once you run into it. Not every room is going to be a rectangle or square. It might be a different shape and while you might think that you hit the whole room because you hit 4 walls and now came across a closed door, you might not be. You could actually just be at another door leading to a bathroom or closet or something else. By leaving the tool there in a place we can find it tells us that we are back to our starting point and our search of this room is complete.

- Irons
 - Halligan
 - Good for forcible entry and venting
 - Poor for sweeping with because of weight
 - Axe
 - Good for sweeping if holding axe portion
 - Poor to force entry, Can use to vent but not ideal
- Can
 - 6' hook
 - Good for venting
 - Poor to navigate with because of length
 - Can
 - Good in case you encounter fire
 - Can use to vent but not ideal
 - Poor for sweeping because of size and weight
- OV
 - 6' hook
 - Good for venting
 - Poor to navigate with because of length
 - Halligan
 - Good for forcible entry and venting
 - Poor for sweeping with because of weight

General methods for primary and secondary searches follow a systematic pattern.

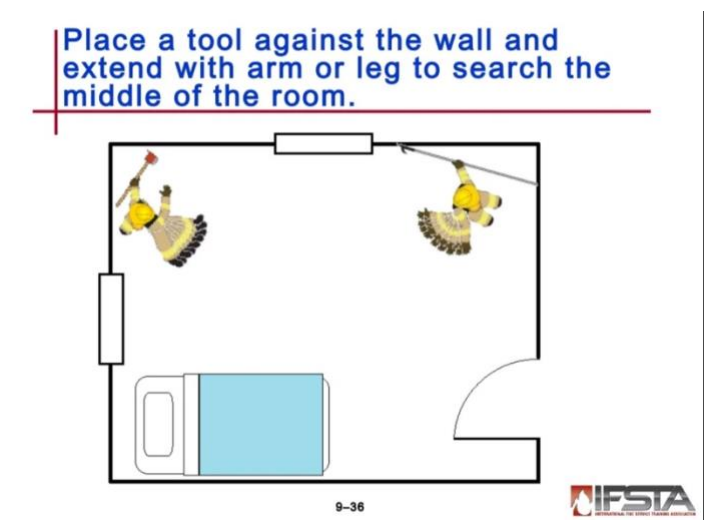
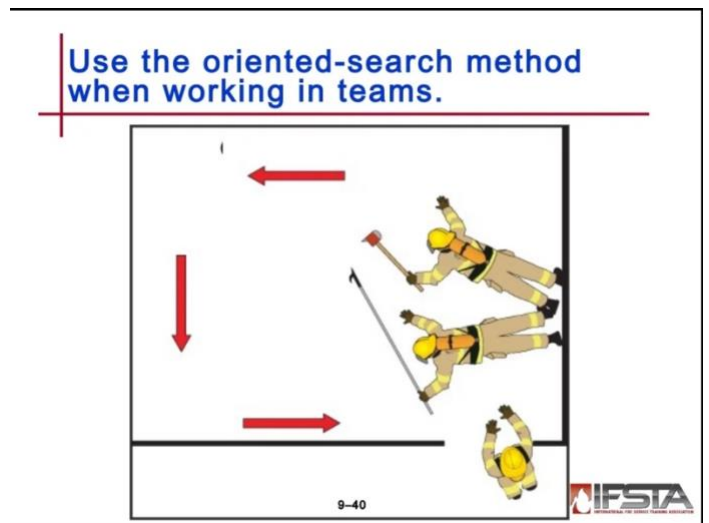


Sweeping the room: So, we enter into the room. The first thing that we are going to do it check behind the door. If we go back to our stats a lot of victims are not only found in bedrooms, but they are also found in paths of egress. A victim could have been overcome by smoke when they tried to make it to the hallway to get out of the house and went down at their bedroom door. You might open that door and sandwich them behind the door or they might have opened the door and went unconscious in a single motion sandwiching themselves. Regardless, **CHECK BEHIND THE DOOR!** You are going to see that a lot of times you naturally pick which direction you are traveling by the way that door opens. If you look at the search pattern in the picture above. The firefighter enters and the door swings to the left. That firefighter SHOULD be checking behind that door, which because of the way the door swings put them on a "LEFT HAND LEAD". There is no point in switching your search direction once you are on this wall, all that you are doing is wasting time that you or

your victim doesn't have. At this point if conditions warrant, and if necessary, you should be thinking about closing the door to isolate yourself while you search and also placing one of your two tools at that door. Once this is set, we are going to begin our search into the open areas and dead space of that room. In sticking with that "left hand lead" we are going to move around the room in a clockwise motion with our "left side" oriented to the wall. As we move we want to sweep the walls up and down feeling for doors and windows. If we feel a door we need to open it up and get in there. Could be a closet, could be a bathroom, it doesn't matter whatever it is there could be a victim on the other side. Inward opening doors are usually bedrooms or bathrooms and outward opening doors are usually closets and basements.

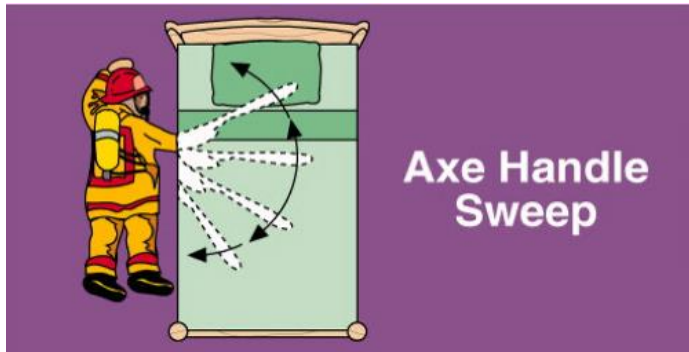
- Bathroom- If you encounter a bathroom, treat it like a room, check behind the door and search in. A bathroom is typically 5' x 9', with a vanity, toilet and a tub it usually becomes almost like a hallway. Get in there and be sure to check inside the tub.
- Closets: can be as small as 2'x 4' or as big as a room. Same thing, treat it like a room, get in there and search, be conscious of what's hanging, it's an easy place to get hung up on clothing

If it's a window it might need to be vented this is where tool selection is important. Remember though, venting is something that needs to be coordinated with fire suppression so don't be recklessly smashing windows. When you find that window make sure you are doing a really good sweep of the area, again this is a point of egress, so its highly likely that a victim could be nearby. **Keep a mental note of what you are coming across as you search, that window or door you felt could be our quickest means of egress for ourselves or our victim if we locate one.** Aside from feeling for windows and doors with your lead hand you also need to be feeling into the open space in the middle of the room. This is where it becomes important to understand that your "lead hand" is really your "lead side". A proven technique is to utilize your lead side foot and reach all the way into the middle of the room sweeping with your arms and tool. (reference picture to the right. NOTE: we are not committing two firefighters into a room of this size this picture is for illustration purposes only) If you can imagine the height of a firefighter stretched out on their belly with their arms extended with a tool. That's at least 7' feet into the room plus the tool sweeping. That within itself covers a good portion of a normal sized room. If you do this in a few places throughout the room you are covering the whole thing and are overlapping your search area. Another modification of this is to put the tool against the wall and then put your foot on the tool and extend out. From here we can also start to move slightly off our tool if the space is really large. Searching isn't about hugging the walls, you are going to need to get off the wall are get to open space while still keeping orientation. If you extend a tool off the wall and reach out and make deliberate controlled



motions you should always be able to find your tool to bring you back to the wall if needed. Again, these rooms really aren't that big, one movement in either direction and you should basically be able to make it across the room. As you search, keep that mental image of what you are touching as you go that way if you do get turned around you are able to make it back to something and potentially identify it to regain your orientation.

As you come across beds, couches and chairs you need to be sure to check above and below (dead space). Don't pat the area down, get in the habit of sweeping. When we pat or poke we really aren't feeling anything, if we sweep with our hand or a tool we get a better indication of if a potential victim is there or not. Get up on those beds and couches and do a good sweep of the entire surface just be cognizant of pushing a small child off into the space between the item and a wall. Checking under is usually a challenge given the size some of



of the objects you are checking under. Outside of a crib sweeping with your arm isn't really going to cut it. Utilize what you have, your leg, a tool, you want to make sure you are getting all the way under. Don't toss furniture around, all that you are doing is making a hazard for yourself and could potentially bury a victim that's in an area that you haven't searched yet. If you need to check behind something move it out, give it a sweep and keep moving, don't toss it halfway across the room.



Whenever we search with a tool, we always want to be conscious of how and where we are swinging them. We don't want to be smashing a victim or our search partner(s).

When we search don't be afraid to call out to people. No one says that you have to be silent when you are searching. Not only should you be calling out to other

members of your team to ensure that they are OK and still within voice contact but call out to potential victims. With that being said, it's also important to listen, although you are moving and breathing through your mask you might still be able to hear someone who is calling out to you. They might be in an area of refuge, sheltering in place calling out for help, so if you aren't listening you are going to miss call for help. Stop every few seconds and orient yourself, make sure you are still systematically searching and not just aimlessly pinballing around a room.

Now remember all of this is being done in a quick, aggressive, systematic manner, we aren't wasting time, we are moving with a purpose.

Victim Removal

There are a number of different ways to remove a victim. Some are better than others and all have their time and place. Just like anything else practice and training are paramount. **Victim removal is about getting down and dirty and getting the job done as fast and as efficient as possible.** There are a lot of thoughts that victims can only be moved headfirst. While this has its advantages, it's not the only way of moving a victim. You do however want to try to move a victim in the supine position (on their backs). **It's all about getting the victim out of the IDLH as fast as humanly possible.** If the victim is 10 feet from the front door with his feet

facing out, then there is not point in wasting time spinning them around if you can drag them out by their feet. Remember, there is no wrong way of moving a victim and there isn't going to be only one technique. The biggest difference are the levels of efficiency of the movement depending on the victim and their location. You have to remember that victims come in all shapes and sizes and so do our abilities as firefighters. Practice different techniques, practice solo, practice as a team, practice on different surfaces. Moving a victim in a training center on nice smooth flooring is a whole lot different than dragging a victim around furniture on shag carpet. This is why training with different drags or techniques are so important, don't let yourself become a one trick pony when it comes to victim removal.

- **Locating a victim**

- **Whenever you locate a victim be sure to take a second and search around the immediate vicinity for other potential victims.**
 - It's not uncommon for victims to be escaping together, so another could be nearby.
- **Make sure you verbalize that you found a victim, don't keep it to yourself!!**
 - If you are searching with a crew and the other members are nearby let them know you have someone so they can make their way over to you to help out.
- **Make a radio transmission to command to let them know you found a victim and where you are.**
 - Hopefully others are listening and come to your assistance or command assigns someone to head over to your location and help out.
 - *With that being said, if you ever are on the listening end and hear a radio transmission of a victim being located don't just rush over there if you aren't within the immediate vicinity. Many hands make light work but sometimes too many just make it a mess. If every Tom, Dick and Harry on the fireground rushes over to assist in the victim removal they can potentially just get in the way and stall the operation. Reports of victims, maydays and urgents make people's heads pop off and do crazy things, don't be that person. We have to police ourselves and have a little common sense. If you are nearby and can actually be of assistance, you go, but if you are operating the handline and suppressing the fire you stick to your assignment.*
- **Quickly devise a plan and get moving!!**
 - Advise command of how you will be bringing the victim out
 - Hopefully you know which way is out
 - Sometimes a nearby window is faster than dragging through the house

- **Wrist lock drag:** The wrist lock drag is a good technique for a single firefighter dragging an adult victim. This can be done using either one or both of the victim's arms. As pictured, you can cross the arms and get a solid grip on the wrists and drag headfirst. Another technique is to grab one wrist with both of your hands and drag. This is sometimes more advantageous because it can potentially get the victim up on their side making it easier to manipulate around any turns. It also puts less of their body on the ground causing less friction when dragging making the drag slightly more manageable. This technique can also be used with two firefighters each grabbing a wrist and dragging together. While this seems like a no brainer, just keep in mind of the space you will need for two firefighters to drag together side



by side.

- **Crossed leg drag:** The crossed leg drag is another good technique for a single firefighter. If the victim is oriented in a certain way there is no point in wasting time and energy in spinning them if you don't have to. If there's no issues with going feet first then this will work. This drag involves crossing the legs at the ankles and then the firefighter grasping them in a hugging manner up against their body and dragging feet first. As you can see in the picture this gets the victims bottom up and off the ground. The one issue with dragging feet first is that the arms have a tendency to go out away from the body, these can get hung up on furniture, doorways, etc.



- **Two firefighter carry:** The two firefighter carry technique is another way to move victims. Similar to moving a downed firefighter it involves one firefighter at the head and the other at the legs. The firefighter at the head will get a good grip with both arms under the victims armpits and across the chest. The firefighter at the legs can either cross the legs and get one shoulder under the knees or get one leg over each shoulder. This technique is extremely effective in ascending staircases. Just like anything else we do in pairs both firefighters need to be in sync with one another to make this work. The firefighter at the head will usually make to call of when to move. The cadence is "READY--DRIVE". There is a 1-2 second pause between "ready" and "drive" during the cadence incase the other firefighter is not ready they are able to say "STOP". It's important to use this cadence and nothing else, anything else is confusing or sounds like something it isn't. When the head firefighter says "DRIVE" both firefighters are moving. While a victim probably has less to get hung up on, it's still good practice to LIFT and then MOVE just like you would a downed firefighter. A small movement is still a movement so don't get discouraged, just keep moving. If you do get hung up on something treat it as you would any other time don't just try to pull harder. If you are able to move large distance by picking the victim up then do it, but just be conscious about slamming/dropping the victim after each movement.
- **Over the knee:** With smaller individuals, utilizing the beggars crawl and draping that person over your knee and locking them in with an arm almost like a football carry is a technique to move with someone who is small and light. By keeping them tucked into your body you are doing your best to protect them from the elements within, but are still able to move as though you would if you were



advancing a hoseline.

- **Considerations for stairs:** This is when you want to be deliberate in your orientation and your movements. You are going to know whether or not you have to navigate stairs prior to getting there. Set yourself up for success by having a plan and getting the victim properly oriented to the type of carry you are going to do. Navigating stairs is a very demanding task and really requires two or more firefighters. When going up stairs its most beneficial to go headfirst. This allows one firefighter to get at the head grabbing under the arms and the other to be at the bottom pushing from under the legs. When going down the stairs there are two different thoughts on this. You can go headfirst and almost sit the victim up in a seated V-position and guide them down riding on their butt by being in front of them and having control under the armpits. This allows gravity to do the work but you have to be conscious of maintaining control of the victim so they don't just go flying down the stairs taking you out and causing unnecessary injury to them. The second way of descending is by keeping them feet first and allowing them to slide down with one firefighter at the head keeping their shoulders slightly raised so their head doesn't bounce off of every tread. The second firefighter will be at the feet to ensure that the legs don't get hung up on each tread. Doing it this way you typically have a little more control than the other way, but it all depends on the ability and training of the rescuers.

These are not the only types of drags that can be used they are just a few examples. Practice and see what works best in what scenarios. Keep in mind that dragging a dummy is completely different than dragging a real human being. So, it's never a bad idea to practice with one another under suitable controlled conditions. If you notice we haven't discussed any sort of drags with the assistance of rope or webbing. As was stated earlier, there are no wrong ways of moving a victim. *However, this segment is intended to highlight the down and dirty ways of removing a victim as fast as possible.* The problem with placing the victim in a some sort of a dragging harness with personal rope or webbing is that it takes time. It takes time that the victim doesn't have. If we can become proficient in removing victims different without the use of aids, then we are in motion within seconds of locating them. Hasty harnesses, girth hitches under the armpits and handcuff knots around the wrists are some of the more common ways of victim removals with personal webbing. Can they work? YES are they practical? Not really, not in a smoke-filled environment with zero visibility and a race against the clock. We aren't going to say that it's impossible to effectively and efficiently rig any of these up within seconds and be on your way, but it's certainly not ideal. For starters, you'll see that it is extremely difficult to rig any of these dragging devices up in poor conditions. Secondly in order to place a victim in any of these harnesses you are going to have to manipulate their body in some way shape or form. So, in essence you are moving them and exerting energy but not actually progressing towards your target. Rather than waste time and energy going nowhere you might as well utilize a drag technique and start making progress towards the exit.

As you can see victim removal is a down and dirty task. It's all about getting it done as fast as possible. Also just keep in mind that you don't want to do any more damage to the victims you come across. If you locate one and they have a chance of surviving, you don't want to complicate that by roll them down the stairs headfirst. Move with a purpose and get it done but still have to keep in mind patient care. If you have multiple rescuers, switch out and stay fresh, having an ego will only get someone hurt. Whatever technique you use make sure you are grabbing body and not clothing, clothing rips and falls off. Additionally, and unfortunately sometimes victims are burned and skin might be falling off, make sure you are grabbing something substantial by locking into or onto body joints.

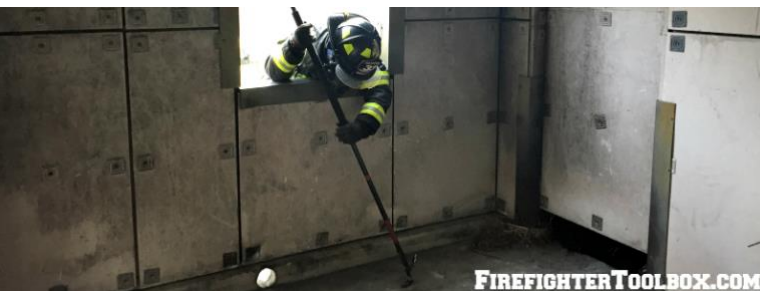
Vent Enter Isolate Search (VEIS)

VEIS is a very vast topic and goes much deeper than just search. Being that searching is the end goal of a VEIS we are going to cover it in this chapter. As discussed earlier, typically the OV is going to be responsible for a VEIS but that's not to say that someone else (Roof, Chauffeur) from the truck company or anyone else for that matter on the fireground will find themselves in a situation to VEIS, especially if there is an immediate potential for rescue identified.

Size-up: A VEIS always begins with a good size-up and making sure you have the proper tools to complete your task. For starters we want to make sure we always have our personal items such as a flashlight and a radio this should be standard anytime we are stepping off the rig. Next if we are attempting to VEIS we want to have a 6' hook, a halligan and potentially a ladder if needed. After this we can start our visual size-up.

- Where is there fire and where do you intend on entering?
 - If there is space not completely occupied by fire, it can and should be searched.
- What floor are you going to?
 - With this comes the question of a ladder do we need one and what size is going to make it?
 - Ladders always get thrown to the sill, not to the side.
 - If it's the first floor you might still need something to boost you in order to get into that window.
 - Make sure you are going to be able to make it inside before you vent.
- Take note of the conditions
 - Smoke pressure color and fire conditions

Vent: Prior to venting you want to make sure you are squared away with everything else. Remember from fire dynamics, the clock starts once you vent. Once that window is broken you begin to create a flow path, from the fire to the window that you vented (*reference picture to the right for before and after the vent*). So, prior to venting that window you want to make sure everything is in place, you can locate your second tool and you are ready to dump into that window and go to work. Before entering make sure that you also advise command of what you are doing: "Command-1 O.V. going to be performing a VEIS 2nd floor window 2/3 corner". Once you are ready to go and command has been notified. Break out that window striking at the highest corner and working down being sure to cleaning out the entire window, sash and anything hanging in the window.



Enter: utilize your hook to sweep below the entry point for victims using the half circle sweep technique and then going left to right. Once we are sure there are no victims at the windowsill you can sound the floor. We want to do it in this order, so we don't accidentally stab a victim if they happen to be at the window in attempting to sound the floor first. If the floor feels structurally sound, place your halligan down into the room

and then lock your hook into the windowsill on a diagonal into the room. This will help you ease into the room and also becomes an identification point when you eventually attempt to make it to the window. Dump

by

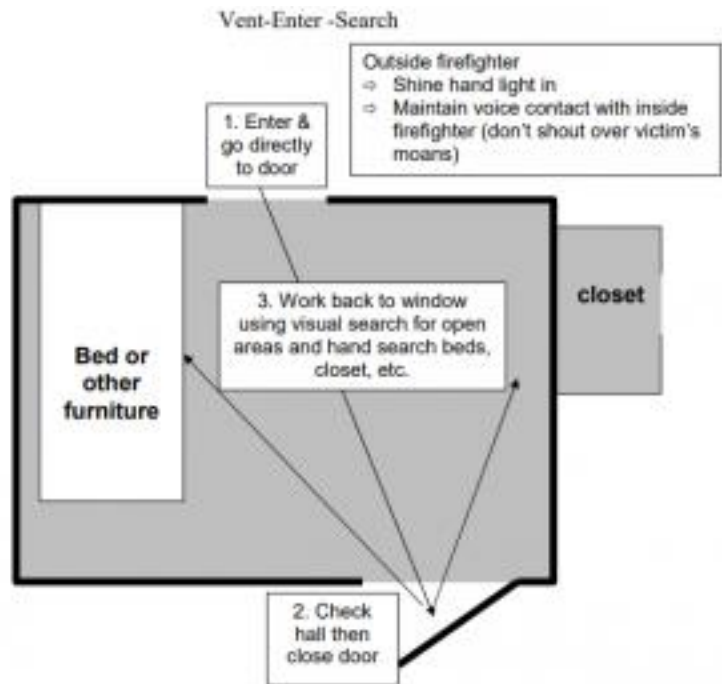


into the room

diving headfirst hooking the sill with your arm to control your decent into the room.

Isolate: Immediately after dumping into the room you should be in pursuit of finding that door in order to isolate that room from deteriorating hallway conditions. This is where understanding building construction and layout is vital. Again, you are in a race to get that door closed because of the flow path that you created by venting that window. If you have a basic understanding of layouts you will be able to move across that room without the crutch of searching off a wall and locate the door. A door is typically going to be located towards the center of the house so if we are entering a window in the 2/3 corner our doorway is most likely going to be located in the direction of the 1/4 corner (*reference picture below*). So, by having this general understanding of layout allows you to move directly to the location that a doorway will most likely be. Once we get to that doorway we want to dive deep into the hallway and give it a good sweep for victims and then close the door. Be sure to check for victims behind the door once you close it.

Search: With the door closed, conditions within the room should start to improve. Be sure to do a thorough search of the room as you work your way back to the window. Be sure to hit all of the corners and under and on top of beds, dressers, chairs and inside closets. If a second firefighter is assisting with the VEIS they should remain at the window helping the firefighter on the inside remain oriented. If a victim is found, be sure to communicate to command and move that victim to the window for removal. The most common practice is to place the victim face up with their feet against the wall under the window you are exiting, from there the firefighter inside bends the victims knees and pushes them up to the sill to the second firefighter at the windowsill. If the search of this initial room is complete the firefighter can continue to another room on the interior if conditions in the hallway allow it. The firefighter should make communication with command that they are going to continue their search.



Tips and Tricks

- Inward opening doors are usually bedrooms and bathrooms
- Outward opening doors are usually basements and closets
- Open dresser drawers might be used as cribs
- Adults and dogs flee, cats and kids hide!
- Ladders may be faster for second floor saves
- Do not spend time on unlikely areas if conditions dictate

Summary: Search all starts with size up. Understanding building construction and layout can play a huge part in a good search. We use size up and prior knowledge of common layouts to aid us in our search but when the lights go out and its zero visibility you need to always come back to the search basics that you are going to be taught. That's what keeps us safe and avoids us getting into a bad situation. Expect the unexpected, people do some whacky things, you don't want to get sucked into the fact that a window or a door SHOULD be there. Always follow the SOG's, if there are changes that need to be made let command make those decisions. Remember what the goal of our searches are, fire and victims, victims being the top priority. Always keep in mind that those *seconds aren't your, they are theirs*, so move with a purpose, assess, process information, adapt and overcome. Practice your searches, practice carrying tools, practice your drags. Practice it all and as often as possible.





COMMAK FIRE DEPARTMENT

“Back to Basics Training Bulletin”

Search

As we all know, in the volunteer fire service you need to be a jack of all trades. You need to know engine work, truck work and rescue/RIT work. In limited manpower situations, you may be rolling in as the 3rd engine and be assigned search, or the 2nd truck and be assigned to stretch a 2nd line. Of course, you want to roll in with your SOG responsibility in mind for whatever rig you're on, but this just doesn't work out sometimes...

Search Goals and Objectives could mean a few different things. Are you the first due truck? Then you're searching for fire and life. If you're assigned the duties of the 2nd due truck, then you're searching the floor above for life and fire extension

Tricks of the Trade

- Know your layouts. If you enter a bedroom from the hallway, where is the window going to be? Directly across from the door. Conversely, if you enter a bedroom through a window, the door will be opposite the window. In an 8x10 bedroom, do you really need to be anchored to the wall?
- When you exit a bedroom, remember that the door will always be closer to the top of the stairs
- If you go in a window on the 1/2 corner, the door will be toward the right of the room and opposite if you go in the window on the 1/4 corner
- Beds...Don't pat them down, sweep them with your body and your hands ensuring not to push anything off between the wall and the bed. If you pat down the bed you will miss a small child.
- When checking under a bed, if you can't reach all the way back with your arms (which you can't unless it's a child starter bed) use your legs to sweep underneath for greater reach. Statistically you're looking for a 2-5 year old and it doesn't happen as often as we think. Out of 500, 1%...not a lot.
- “Split Search” in an 8x10 or 12x10 bedroom with two firefighters crawling around blindly the only thing they will find will be each other. There is no room in a standard bedroom for two of you! One FF should search the room and the other should stay at the door in constant communication so the searching FF can orient himself to you, at the door, not the wall.
- Don't become a miner! We see it far too often in burn buildings. The searching FF just blindly crawls along the wall with one hand on the wall and the other is got a tool in his hand and he's just crawling along like he's in a tunnel. What is the point? Is your hand on the wall to find a window or door? If your oriented to the building and consequently, the room you're in...you already know where the window/s and door are. If you've done a size up as you were walking up to the house, you already know where the windows are and where the door is going to be. Unhook your anchor (the wall) and start actually searching for people, not construction components...
- Where are our victims? 46% of victims are found in bedrooms. So when you're assigned search, look for the bedrooms, the hallways. This is where there going to be...”Targeted Search”

There are no “always” and there are no “never's” in the fire service. Sometimes you wind up in a house that's been renovated where a bedroom can be huge. Communication is the key to success, talk to your partner at all times. Set yourself up for success by doing a good size up on arrival and you'll be way ahead of the game!

Stay Safe and Keep Training....

This week's edition written by Joe Digiuse



SEARCH BASICS

.....
Mike Lombardo, Chief (retired) — Buffalo, NY, Fire Department
.....

The hallmark of a good fire department is an aggressive and thorough search. Most fire departments have somewhere in their mission statement the tenant to save life and property. In reality saving life is really what we are here for. The public likes all the neat stuff we do but when push comes to shove they want us around to save them and their loved ones from doom. Although they may not consciously think about it, people in your community go to sleep at night with the comfort that some unknown man or woman will come to their home and rescue them in the night from the horror of burning to death. This is an awesome responsibility for all of us, SO DON'T SCREW IT UP!!! The following are just some random thoughts on search. They may be able to help you out some time.

- When entering ahead or without a line remember that a 2½-gallon extinguisher can knock down fire, more importantly it can hold fire until you are able to pass or close a door or remove a baby!
- When we search we want to get as close as we can to the fire and work out on fire floor searches. We want to do this so we can cover area before the fire does. When we search a floor above a fire we want to start our search at the point of entry.
- Don't ever assume a place is empty, search every time! This summer my company has removed 3 civilians from two different fires in "obvious" boarded up vacant buildings.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



SEARCH...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- If manpower is low try to get to the most logical spots to search first. At night we want to hit the bedrooms fast, in a two-story home they are probably on the 2nd floor.
- How we search for kids and adults is different.
- Adults will try to escape, we want to look at avenues of egress — hallways, doorways, behind doors etc. Adults will try to save their children. If you find an adult always sweep around to make sure they were not carrying a small child.
- When searching a large department store or office building one tip that may help is to feel the floor. If I am on carpet I am probably in the sales area. If I am on tile or linoleum I am probably in the aisle way.



- Kids may hide. You may find children anywhere and everywhere that you can possibly think to look. Kids may be afraid of us and may be afraid due to the fact that they may have started the fire.
- There is a third type of person that we can search for. That is a firefighter. He or she can be anywhere in a structure. Searching in kneewall areas to find a child, or up in a crawlspace looking for extension. Firefighters can be anywhere, so we must look everywhere when searching for one of our own.
- VES; vent, enter, and search techniques are dangerous and can draw and spread a fire but they are extremely successful if done aggressively. VES takes an educated size-up by the chief officers as well as by the members who are going to accomplish this task to know when "to go or not go."
- The buddy system is great but more than that is even better. We see that handline operations require a minimum of 3 firefighters to accomplish. Search and rescue operations are the same 3 or more is a good size team.

When we search we want to get as close as we can to the fire and work out on fire floor searches. We want to do this so we can cover area before the fire does. When we search a floor above a fire we want to start our search at the point of entry.

With 3 firefighters we can have one firefighter at a point of safety to alert us to changing conditions, to be a beacon if a firefighter becomes lost or disoriented, and to offer relief when we move to the next area.

- The primary search must be thorough and rapid. We can not take all day to accomplish a primary search in a home. All results of all searches should be communicated back to the IC.
- If possible use different crews to perform the primary and secondary searches. This will provide a fresh look at the area instead of the same person missing the same thing.
- Many firefighters ask what way is best to show a room was searched? In the past different things were taught such as chalk on a door (how do you see chalk in smoke anyway), turning a mattress in to a "U." There are also tags on the market to display on a door saying this area is searched, these things are not a good idea. They apply to the 5% fires, in a hotel etc. Remember that 85% of the fire fatalities in this country occur in ones and twos, and in our homes. These large searches such as hotels motels etc. are much better controlled by good fireground communications, the IC will sector off a building like that for a search. No one should say that this room is searched, don't worry you don't have to go in there. Don't let your EGO get in the way of a good search!!! I don't care how many teams the chief wants to use to go over an area, I am never going to say I am positive that there is no baby in that smoke filled room. What if something was missed (baby), how would we feel?
- Try to get information from a source in the home who has escaped, or a neighbor, that will help you and your crews with their search. How many people, where they might be, if they are children what are the ages, where are stairs, bedrooms etc. This information should be used but never counted on. What I mean by that is that a "baby" can be a 22-year-old adult out on a weekend

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



SEARCH...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

There is a third type of person that we can search for. That is a firefighter. He or she can be anywhere in a structure. Searching in kneewall areas to find a child, or up in a crawlspace looking for extension. Firefighters can be anywhere, so we must look everywhere when searching for one of our own.

crack high, or can be a 9-year-old poodle. These things can definitely affect your search. We won't be able to stop to get too much detailed information. However, the pump operator, police officer, or the IC can get more detailed info. For instance, I would like to know how old a baby is, if a child is 4 months old and Mom said she left him in the front room upstairs, the baby is probably still in that same spot. If a baby is 2 1/2 years old, we will probably want to give a good "look" at the last place the child was seen but remember that the child could have moved just about anywhere.

- In a commercial building if no information is available from employees, look at the time cards they may tell you quickly who is in the building and who is not.
- Someone needs to check the rear. Has anyone jumped? Did you look in the bushes on the way around back? Is anyone hanging out a window?
- Stay low, it helps you from getting burned up. You are less likely to fall through a hole in the floor.
- Talk to each other and to the chief, let them know what you find, it also will make you feel more comfortable. When you report to the chief via radio get in the habit of giving your location each time. In an emergency it may help to pinpoint your location if you can't be reached or there is a problem. (collapse, rapid fire development, etc.)

- Be quiet and hold your breath, now and then you may hear a victim. You may use this time to orient yourself also.
- Look out a window that you vent to orient yourself to the building exterior, try and see where a ladder may be if you are on the 2nd floor. If you find fire let the IC, and your teams know. Close the door to that area if possible.
- If you become confused or disoriented stop and sit for a second to compose yourself. Panic is your worst enemy. Always try and be aware of where you are. If you're out of air get as low as possible. Don't ever give up, stay in control, safety is often a room -- or the end of a hallway -- away. Tell yourself you can make it!

SEARCH BASICS

Probe to determine if anyone is lying close to a door or window.

Check all closets thoroughly.

To locate victims under beds, insert your leg under the bed and sweep gently back and forth.

Always be alert for signs of trapped victims, such as crying, coughing, or moaning.

Ventilate as you move, providing fire will not extend by your venting.

Graphic from FDNY FFP

TRAINING SAVES LIVES
FIREFIGHTERS





Commack Fire Department

Training Division



Badge#	Name:
---------------	--------------

Date _ / _ / _

SEARCH & V.E.I.S

Searching	Pass	Fail	COMMENTS
Understands first and second due ladder responsibilities			
Identifies truck riding positions, tools and assignments (inside vs outside)			
Understands the different between primary and secondary search			
Properly demonstrates searching (sweeping beds, checking behind doors)			
Properly demonstrates how to perform either a right or left hand lead			
Properly demonstrates how to perform a search with while carrying tools			

Vent, Enter, Isolate & Search	Pass	Fail	COMMENTS
Understands when and where to VEIS and proper radio communications			
Sweeps floor with tool and sounds floor			
Properly enters into the window			
Immediately locates door and sweeps hallway			
Isolates by closing door and checking dead space behind open door			
Searches room			
Takes proper action when locating a victim (verbalizes, radio communication)			
Drags victim to window and properly orients for window removal			

PASSED ALL SKILLS

Evaluator:	Signature
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Search

Written: 9/2022

Version: #1

Revision# _____

Date: _____

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