

**Policy:** **Interior Structural Fire Fighting Safety Guidelines – Two-In and Two-Out**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to establish policies and procedures for Northern Piatt County FPD personnel when commencing interior firefighting operations during the early stages of a structural fire where an immediate danger to life and health (IDLH) atmosphere exists as defined by the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) regulations. IDOL requires compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Respiratory Protection Regulation. This regulation requires that when operating in an IDLH atmosphere, personnel use self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), that a minimum of two firefighters work as a team inside (two-in) the structure and that a minimum of two firefighters be on standby outside (two-out) the structure to provide assistance or perform rescue.

**Scope:** Applies to all NPPFD personnel

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## **Policy**

This regulation does not require a separate “two-out” team for each team operating in the structure. However, if the incident escalates, and if accountability cannot be properly maintained from a single point of entry or if rapid rescue becomes infeasible, additional outside crews must be added. If the structure were large enough to require entry at different locations or levels, additional “two-out” teams would be required. Ultimately, this decision of assignments is to be made by the Incident Commander.

The Northern Piatt County FPD considers the two-in/two-out requirement to be the minimum acceptable standard for safe fireground operations for all firefighters when self-contained breathing apparatus is used.

There shall be a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) at all structure fires where there is an immediate danger to life and health (IDLH) atmosphere and an interior attack is being conducted. This policy is intended to insure the safety of all firefighting personnel. There are exceptions to this rule, which focus on a known rescue situation in the structure that is on fire. The exceptions shall be noted later in the document.

## **Definitions:**

**Immediate Danger to Life and Health Atmosphere (IDLH).** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) defines an IDLH atmosphere for interior structure fires to be “an advanced fire that has spread inside the building where high temperatures,

heat and dense smoke “ are present. Any structure beyond the incipient stage is considered as an IDLH atmosphere.

**Rapid Intervention Team (RIT).** A specific group of firefighters at the scene of an emergency designated to the sole tactical purpose of assisting or rescuing other firefighters operating in an IDLH atmosphere or dangerous environment.

**Working Structure Fire.** An advanced fire that has spread inside the building where high temperatures, heat and dense smoke are present.

**Procedure:**

1. At least a minimum of five personnel shall be on the scene before initiating interior firefighting operations at a structure fire. One of the standby persons must provide constant awareness and maintain communications with the interior firefighting team. The other standby person is permitted to perform other duties outside the hazardous (IDLH) atmosphere, such as the apparatus operator or Incident Commander. The duties of the standby personnel must not interfere with their ability to perform the duties of a standby person and assist in the event of an emergency. **Note:** *An exception to this would be a four-person company, where the IC is the Company Officer on the attack team. One firefighter would be with the Officer, the other firefighter would be the standby person monitoring the attack team. The engineer would be the other standby person with pump operator responsibility. Although a four- person company is unusual, there are times when companies are staffed at this level.*
2. Members who arrive on the scene of a working structural fire prior to the assembly of five persons may initiate exterior actions in preparation for an interior attack. This may include, but is not limited to:
  - Establishing command and giving other units pre-arrival directions
  - Doing a complete size-up of the structure
  - Looking inside doorways and windows for victims or to locate the fire
  - Establishing the water supply
  - Controlling utilities
  - Placing of ladders
  - Advancing the attack line to the entrance of the structure
  - Protecting exposures
  - Attacking the fire from the outside through doorways and windows
3. Personnel engaged in interior structural firefighting beyond the incipient stage shall wear SCBA, operate in a buddy system and maintain voice or visual contact with one another at all times. Radios are not an acceptable replacement for visual

or voice contact. Radios shall not be the sole tool for accounting for one's partner in the interior of a structure.

4. The standard response to a reported working structure fire shall be two engine companies, one rescue company and a Command Officer. The telecommunicator at Piatt County Dispatch can make the working fire declaration from the information from the reporting party and number of phone calls. The declaration may also be made by the first-arriving company or by the first-arriving chief officer.
5. The Incident Commander shall designate a company as the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT). The officer or acting officer on the RIT shall also function as the on-scene safety officer until the NPPFD Safety Officer arrives or until relieved. The engineer and firefighter shall be standing by near the entrance to the structure where the attack crew(s) entered with turnout gear, SCBA and forcible entry tools. The RIT shall not be used for any duties that hinder their ability to immediately go to the aid of the attack crew(s).
6. If the Incident Commander needs additional resources, the RIT shall not be reassigned until the additional resources are on the scene. If entry is being made into the structure at two or more distant locations, then a RIT needs to be assigned to each location.
7. At any time during an incident, the Incident Commander may request additional resources to maintain a safe emergency scene.

### **Exceptions:**

If, upon arrival at the scene, members find a situation where immediate action may prevent the loss of life or serious injury, such action shall be permitted with less than five persons on the scene when conducted in accordance with normal size-up indicators and evaluation factors.

**Residential Occupancies** – The first-arriving officer must conduct a size-up to determine if the structure is occupied. Things such as time of day, day of the week, and visible indications that someone is home such as cars in the driveway must be considered before conducting an interior attack without two personnel on the outside. The absence of a report from a responsible person on the scene that everyone is out of the residence, it is not to be used to justify that a life hazard exists.

**Non-residential Occupancies** – A non-residential occupancy will have to be evaluated for a life hazard by considering the type of occupancy, time of the day, day of the week, reports from persons on the scene if there is a life hazard.

**Vacant or Abandoned Structures** – These types of structures with an IDLH atmosphere shall not be entered without five persons on the scene, unless there are clear signs or a report from a responsible person that there are people in the structure.

**Reports:**

Any officer who performs an interior attack without meeting the two-in/two-out requirement shall write a report in the narrative section of the fire report justifying the decision. The report shall include everything noted in the size-up and neighbor or bystander reports that indicated a life hazard in the structure fire. The officer shall also write a report to the Fire Chief justifying the decision. This report shall also include everything noted in the size-up and neighbor or bystander reports that indicated a life hazard in the structure fire.

By the Order of: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fire Chief

Date: \_\_\_\_\_