

Santa Barbara City Fire Department - Standard Operating Procedures Emergency Operations	Code: E-III-10
Civilian Rescue	
Chpt: III Structure Fires	Revised: 1/16/12 Pages: 4

I. POLICY:

A. To extend a primary search in all involved and exposed occupancies which can be entered.

II. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

A. Primary search - Companies have quickly gone through all effected areas and verified the removal of all occupants. Time is the critical factor in the primary search process. Successful primary search operations must be conducted quickly and during initial fire stages.

B. Secondary Search - Companies thoroughly search the interior of the fire area after initial fire control and ventilation activities have been completed.

C. ALL CLEAR - the standard radio reporting term indicating that the primary search has been completed and nothing has been found.

D. Anchor Method – 2 person search method where one member “anchors” by the door and maintains orientation, while the other member searches. (See [T-III-1](#) Anchor method)

E. Split-Team Method – 2 person search method where upon entering the room one partner will follow the wall to the right, while the other will follow to the left. When they meet, they will proceed towards the center of the room then move back towards the door. (See [T-III-2](#) Split team method)

F. Search and Rescue – This term should be used when structuring a primary search over the radio; “ALL CLEAR” should be used only as a completion report

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES:

A. (See [T-III-3](#) Search guidelines)

B. Don't depend upon reports from spectators to determine status of victims, instead, utilize reports as to the location, number, and condition of victims as supporting primary search efforts. Command must extend and complete a primary search wherever entry is possible

C. Consider the following factors in developing a basic rescue size-up:

1. Number, location and condition of victims.
2. Effect the fire has on the victims.

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3. Capability of the control forces to enter the building, remove/protect victims and control fire.

D. Make the basic rescue decision:

1. Do we remove victims from fire?
2. Do we remove the fire from the victims?
3. In some cases, occupants are safer in their rooms than moving through contaminated hallways and interior areas. Such movement may also impede interior firefighting.

E. Evaluate the manpower required to actually remove victims and then provide first aid for those victims as needed. In cases involving multiple victims, Call for the timely response of adequate resources and quickly develop an organization that will both stabilize the fire and provide for the removal and treatment of the occupants.

F. Rescue efforts should be extended in the following order:

1. Most severely threatened.
2. The largest number (groups)
3. The remainder of the fire area
4. The exposed areas.

G. Make specific primary search assignments to companies to cover specific areas of large-complex occupancies and maintain on-going control of such companies until the entire area is searched.

H. All initial attack efforts must be directed toward supporting rescue efforts and hose lines must be placed in a manner to control interior access, confine the fire, and protect avenues of escape.

I. Normal means of interior access (stairs, halls, interior public areas, etc.) should be utilized to remove victims whenever possible. Secondary means of rescue (platforms, ladders, fire escapes, helicopters, lifelines, etc.) must be utilized in their order of effectiveness.

J. Consider treatment of victims after removal. Multiple victims should be removed to one location for more effective treatment. Coordinate and utilize medical capability wherever available and assign treatment personnel as required to an exterior Medical Unit Leader.

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K. Once the primary search has been completed and an “ALL CLEAR” transmitted, maintain control of access to the fire area; beware of occupants (and others) reentering the building.

L. The most urgent reason for calling additional alarms is for the purpose of covering life safety - develop a realistic (and pessimistic) rescue size-up as early as possible.

IV. OPERATIONS - PRIMARY SEARCH:

A. Structure initial operations around the completion of the primary search.

B. It is the responsibility of Command to coordinate primary search assignments, secure completion reports from interior companies and to transmit the “ALL CLEAR” report to the Communications Center. Communications will record the time of this report from Command.

C. This stage of the fire becomes a critical factor that affects the rescue approach developed by Command. The following items outline the basic command approach to fire stages:

1. In nothing showing situations or in very minor fire cases that clearly pose no life hazard, Command must structure a rapid interior search and report “ALL CLEAR”. (The interior search for victims will also verify no fire.)
2. In smoke showing and working fire situations, fire control efforts must be extended simultaneously with rescue operations in order to gain entry and control interior access to complete primary search. In such cases, Command and operating companies must be aware the operation is in a rescue mode until primary search is complete, regardless of the fire control required.
3. In working fire situations, primary search must be followed by a secondary search.
4. In cases of fully involved buildings or sections of buildings, immediate entry and primary search activities become impossible and survival of occupants is improbable. Command must initially report fully involved conditions and he/she will not report an all clear. As quickly as fire control is achieved, Command must structure what is in effect a secondary search for victims.

D. When primary search companies encounter and remove victims, assign other companies to continue to cover the interior positions vacated by those companies

V. OPERATIONS - SECONDARY SEARCH:

A. The rescue functions that follow lengthy fire control activities will be regarded tactically as presenting a secondary search. “Secondary Search” means that companies

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thoroughly search the interior of the fire area after initial fire control and ventilation activities have been completed.

B. Secondary search should preferably be completed by different companies than those involved in primary search activities. Thoroughness, rather than speed, is the critical factor in secondary search.