

ESCAMBIA COUNTY FIRE-RESCUE

Standard Operating Guidelines

K. W. Perkins, Fire Chief

4100.035

Dumpster Fires

Implemented: 01-11-06

Revised:

Page 1 of 3



PURPOSE

Dumpster fires can provide firefighters with a wide range of tactical and safety concerns. The types of dumpsters, their normal contents, and unknown contents must be analyzed and addressed at a dumpster fire incident.

OBJECTIVE

To provide personnel with guidelines that identify safe and effective operating methods at the scene of dumpster fire incidents.

SCOPE

All personnel.

DEPLOYMENT

This may or may not be an emergency response. Based upon information received from dispatch, the company officer may elect to respond with or without lights and sirens. Information such as the size of the dumpster, the occupancy it serves, and its proximity to buildings and/or other property, at a minimum should be considered. A single engine from the jurisdictional station shall respond. This may be upgraded based on pre-arrival information received from dispatch, or upon conditions found upon arrival at the scene.

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Personnel shall wear all personal protective equipment and self-contained breathing apparatus while extinguishing dumpster fires.

OPERATIONS

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Personnel shall operate utilizing guidelines contained in **3105.005 (Incident Management)**. The incident commander must determine if any hazardous materials are involved in the dumpster, and if so, treat the scene as a hazardous materials incident.

APPARATUS PLACEMENT

Apparatus should be parked for best advantage, upwind and uphill of the incident to afford protection from hazardous liquids and vapors and to reduce smoke in the work area. Be cautious of entering narrow roadways/alleys where egress might be impeded.

RESCUE

The probability of trapped and/or injured victims is low. However, homeless persons are known to take refuge in dumpsters during cold weather conditions. Where the fire threatens exposures, the rescue of humans overrides all other strategic considerations, and evacuation may need to be considered.

EXPOSURE PROTECTION

Exposure protection must be considered and addressed where the spread of fire from the involved dumpster to a structure, vehicle, wildland area, or other property is likely.

If necessary, the initial hoseline shall be deployed to protect and cool exposures to the point where the line may then be used for confinement and extinguishment, or until an additional hoseline can be deployed for fire confinement and extinguishment.

CONFINEMENT

Confinement of the fire to the dumpster shall be a tactical objective. Firefighters shall make access to and attack dumpster fires in a method that causes the least amount of damage to the dumpster and prevents extension of the fire to any exposures.

EXTINGUISHMENT

In most cases, a quick and aggressive attack on the seat of the fire will address rescue, exposure, confinement, and extinguishment tactical objectives at the same time.

Attack fire from upwind.

Trash lines or 1 ¾" hoselines can be used for most dumpster fires. However, hand held extinguishers may be sufficient to extinguish small fires.

At least one member of the attack team should have tools in his/her possession to aid in accessing the dumpster and "stirring" the contents of the dumpster for overhaul.

OVERHAUL

Ensure that the dumpster has been extinguished. Pulling the contents out of a dumpster for overhaul should be avoided if possible.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

All members involved in the operation shall be in full protective clothing, including self-contained breathing apparatus.

Attack the fire from upwind to afford protection from hazardous liquids, vapors and smoke.

Be mindful that the contents in the dumpster may be water reactive, explosive or an oxidizing agent.

Be extremely cautious of personnel safety during overhaul procedures. Personnel shall continue to use SCBAs during overhaul, as the exact contents of dumpsters are rarely known.

Firefighters may have to decontaminate clothing, equipment and apparatus if exposed to hazardous materials.

Seek immediate medical care if any firefighter experiences any unusual feeling, tightness in the chest, nausea, etc.

Be cautious of entering narrow alleys or small areas with fire apparatus where egress might be impeded if an immediate retreat is ordered.

Dumpsters can be set on fire during times of civil unrest. The company officer must ensure the area is safe before exiting the apparatus. In times of civil unrest, the county fire chief may order the dispatch center to discontinue sending fire units to dumpster fires in the distressed area.

NOTIFICATIONS

Most dumpsters have contact information displayed on them. After returning to the station, the company officer should try to contact the dumpster service to advise them of the fire, and that excess water will be in the dumpster during its next servicing.