

# Multi-Family Dwellings

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## 15.0600 Scope:

This procedure has been developed to provide the Town of Menasha Fire Department with a set of guidelines to be followed in the event of an incident involving multiple family dwellings.

Multiple-family dwellings can be defined as "All buildings or portions thereof, that contain three or more living units or areas such as apartments, motels, hotels, condominiums, town houses, row-houses, boarding houses, homes for the elderly, health care facilities, and other like buildings.

This policy does NOT cover one and two family dwellings (15.05) or Highrise Buildings (15.09).

## 15.0601 First Engine to Arrive (Water Supply):

On smoke showing, visible fire or confirmed alarm the first arriving engine should forward lay a 5-inch (LDH) supply line from the nearest fire hydrant prior to arriving at the fire building, OR position the first arriving engine company at the nearest fire hydrant prior to the fire building and allow the officer and fire crew to investigate the condition of the reported fire building (hydrant person & D/O should stay with Engine)

## 15.0602 Catching the Hydrant:

The first arriving engine company should stop at the nearest fire hydrant prior to the reported building on fire. One firefighter shall remove the LDH, hydrant accessory bag and wrap the rope around the hydrant. The hydrant person shall signal the driver of the first arriving engine to proceed to the fire once they have secured the hose/rope around the hydrant. As the engine lays out hose, the hydrant person removes the hydrant caps from the hydrant and flushes the hydrant by SLOWLY opening the hydrant slightly and allowing water to flow out of the hydrant caps until the water runs clear. The hydrant is shut down and the supply hose is attached. If available, a 2 1/2 gated valve should be placed on one 2 1/2 hydrant outlet. Once the hose has been connected, and they have received a signal (visual, radio) from the pump operator, SLOWLY turn the hydrant on. If the engine is out of sight of the hydrant person, the engine operator will signal for water with two short (2-3 sec.) blasts of the air horn. After the hydrant has been turned on, the hydrant person proceeds to the fire and straightens the hose as they proceed, reporting to the engine operator.

## 15.0603 Engine Company Positioning:

Positioning of the apparatus is the responsibility of the officer. The driver should position the apparatus for optimum efficiency. When positioning the engine at a structure fire, the driver should

position the engine just past the fire building if appropriate. This is done for two reasons: 1) It allows the officer to view three sides of the fire building (sides A, B, and D); and, 2) It leaves side A (front) of the fire building available for the ladder company.

Placement of the engine just past the fire building, or placement of the ladder company in the front of the building, may not always be possible. Some conditions such as:

- a. Location of the fire,
- b. Access to the property,
- c. Wind direction, and
- d. Exterior exposures
  - i. May cause the Company Officer or IC to deviate from positioning the apparatus as specified above. Apparatus placement must always be positioned for the safety of personnel and equipment.

**15.0604 Level 1 Staging:**

First arriving Engine responds to pre-assigned position as noted previously. If the building is sprinklered, the second arriving Engine supports the sprinkler system and connects to a second hydrant. Otherwise, all other units, except a Command vehicle, shall stage one block away ready to move to a suggested location or a location ordered by the Incident Commander.

**15.0605 Rescue:**

Rescue of a known life is the #1 Priority. A primary search should be conducted immediately in most cases WITH a charged hoseline. It is also imperative that a handline be stretched to the seat of the fire by the first arriving engine in an attempt to stop the forward progress of the fire. This will facilitate the rescue effort and lessen the danger to the occupants. If the occupants are visible from the exterior of the building, an attempt should be made to rescue them with the use of ground ladders. If staffing permits, the rescue should be carried out while a handline is advanced to the seat of the fire. Members advancing the handline to the fire area can search that area as well as extinguishing or controlling the fire.

Any emergency medical care should be provided to the occupants of the residence as soon as possible (by First Responder or Ambulance personnel), such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation. There should be no hesitation in requesting emergency traffic for an ambulance to treat occupants, or for standing by for possible use at a later time. Any working fire requires the presence of an ambulance on location.

**15.0606 Fire Control:**

At least one handline shall be advanced to the seat of the fire. The line chosen shall never be less than 1-3/4 inches in diameter. In most cases the fire attack should be made from the unburned side of the building. Also in most cases, the line can be advanced through the front door of the dwelling. From this point, access is usually available to all areas of the dwelling. The number of lines to be used will be the choice of the incident commander and depend directly on the nature and size of the fire encountered. A back-up safety line/RIT is necessary to potentially rescue the fire attack crew.

**15.0607 Search and Rescue:**

At least two firefighters (team) will always be assigned this task by the officer. Depending on the size of the multi-family dwelling, two fire fighters may be able to quickly search and locate victims. Larger complexes will require more personnel for search duties.

**15.0608 Primary Search:**

A primary search must be performed at every fire situation, whether fire is showing or not. The only difference is the number of firefighters assigned this task by the Incident Commander. In nothing showing situations, the primary search can be assigned to two fire fighters, however, if a fire is located, more firefighters must be assigned to the task. The crew performing search and rescue must be equipped with a radio to keep in constant communication with the Incident Commander.

When conditions indicate there is a fire or the first arriving company reports a fire in their size-up, a primary search must be performed to locate and remove endangered occupants, or to verify that civilians have escaped the fire. The fire attack crew(s) can perform the primary search of the immediate fire area while the truck or rescue company personnel begin the primary search on the floor immediately above the fire. All searches must be made using a search pattern indicated in Section 15.0510. If time and staffing permits, the search and rescue crews operating above the fire should do so with the protection of a handline. This will provide protection for the firefighters performing this task. Tagline/rescue rope should be used as a minimum protection device to lead search personnel to the way out of the building. This will provide protection for the firefighters performing this task. Firefighters performing the primary search must have forcible entry tools with them to force open locked doors or to aid the escape of the firefighter should he/she become trapped in a building or room.

Victims are often overcome attempting to escape the fire. For this reason, firefighters performing the primary search will commonly find victims next to doors and windows. Firefighters should pay close attention for signs of trapped or injured occupants. Coughing, moaning, or cries for help indicate people may have not escaped the fire. If occupants or victims are located, this should be communicated to the Incident Commander immediately. Victims should be removed via the interior

stairway if at all possible or the closet exit point. Ladders should be used only if passage down the stairway is not possible.

Firefighters should if possible mark or in some way identify the rooms or areas that have been searched. This may be done by placing a piece of furniture or other article that would not be normally found in that location in the doorway or entry to the searched area.

**15.0609 Second Arriving Engine Positioning:**

Sprinklered Buildings: The second arriving engine shall secure a water supply and support the building's automatic fire sprinkler system.

Non-Sprinklered Buildings: The second arriving engine shall locate an alternative hydrant and stand-by for further direction from the Incident Commander. The firefighters from the second arriving engine can be utilized for rescue, RIT or the placement of additional hand-lines. At the option of command, these additional firefighters can be utilized for ladder company (support) activities, fire suppression, or as command deems necessary for control or mitigation of the incident.

**15.0610 Hydrants:**

Hydrant selection by engine companies is very important. Separate water supplies (hydrants) shall be used, if possible, for fire attack and sprinkler system support. (See illustrations.)

**15.0611 Second Arriving Engine Company:**

The primary responsibility of the second arriving engine company will be to ensure that the first arriving engine has an efficient and uninterrupted water supply and an alternative water supply is located. When a fire has been confirmed, the second arriving engine should approach, if possible, from the opposite direction of the first arriving engine company and lay a second supply line into the fire area. If a back-up safety line/RIT has not been established, that should be the first priority of this crew.

**15.0612 Ladder Company Positioning:**

The positioning of the truck shall be the responsibility of the officer, if not assigned by Incident Commander. The first arriving ladder company will normally take up a position at side A (front) of the reported fire building unless directed otherwise.

**15.0613 Ladder Company Operations:**

It will be the responsibility of the Ladder Officer, or Acting Officer, to prioritize the support activities to be performed according to the fire conditions presented. Although some of the duties may have been already implemented by earlier arriving engine companies, it will be the responsibility of the Ladder Officer to coordinate with command the remaining activities to ensure they will be completed. The following are some of the activities or duties that must be addressed: rescue, ladders, forcible entry, salvage, ventilation, and utility control. Many of these duties can be carried out simultaneously with one another.

DEFENSIVE WATER APPLICATION - Aerial Apparatus Water Supply should be provided by the second arriving engine or a third arriving engine (LDH). Allow positioning to accommodate water supply set-up. ALWAYS be ready for this possibility.

**15.0614 Ladders:**

The primary functions of the truck is rescue and ventilation, however other truck duties must be performed in conjunction with rescue. As you will remember from recruit training, many of the duties you will perform will aid in rescue or will greatly facilitate the rescue process.

If occupants are visible at the windows, roofs, or porches, they should be rescued immediately by the use of ground ladders. If people are not visible, ground ladders must be used anyway. At least one ladder must be placed to the second floor living area to permit quick access for search and rescue operations. This ladder will also be used as a secondary means of egress for firefighters operating on the second floor of the structure.

Ladders will play an important role in multiple-family dwelling fires. Ladders are raised for four basic uses:

- a. Rescue
- b. To gain access to upper stories
- c. To obtain firefighting advantage points
- d. To provide for a secondary means of egress for firefighters.

Ladders shall be raised as soon as possible to perform the primary and secondary searches of the upper floors. Ladders should also be raised to provide a secondary means of egress for firefighters that may become trapped on the upper floors of a building by fire or smoke. Roof operations ALWAYS require at least two ladders be raised at different locations on the roof. One ladder is used for access to the roof; the other as a secondary means of egress.

The use of the aerial ladder for roof operations and rescue may save valuable time. The decision for use of this ladder is the Company Officers. On many occasions, it is standard that the truck places its ladder immediately to the roof upon arrival at a working fire.

**15.0615 Rescue Company Operations:**

It will be the responsibility of the Rescue Officer, or Acting Officer, to prioritize the support activities to be performed according to the fire conditions presented. Although some of the duties may have been already implemented by earlier arriving engine companies, it will be the responsibility of the Rescue Officer to coordinate with command the remaining activities to ensure they will be completed. The following are some of the activities or duties that must be addressed: rescue, ladders, forcible entry, salvage, ventilation, RIT and utility control. Many of these duties can be carried out simultaneously with one another.

**15.0616 Rapid Intervention Team:**

When interior fire attack occurs within a structure, a Rapid Intervention Team shall be assigned by the Incident Commander. The RIT Team shall secure the necessary equipment needed to perform an effective and efficient removal of personnel should they experience trouble. It will be the responsibility of the RIT Team leader to stay apprised with the probable location of all personnel who are operating within the structure. It will be critical to coordinate RIT Team activities with the Incident Commander along with the scene Safety Officer. See RIT Procedures located in Section 4.34.

**15.0617 Ventilation:**

Ventilation must be performed. Ventilation facilitates rescue, fire control and property conservation. Ventilation shall not occur until attack lines have been charged. Positive Pressure Ventilation is preferred but there are risks involved with utilizing PPV. If the location of the fire cannot be determined the safety of the interior crews or victims may be compromised. The IC will determine the need for vertical or horizontal ventilation. This task will normally be conducted by the ladder or rescue company but could be conducted by the second arriving engine crew if necessary. Ventilation should be one of the early priorities!

Prior to roof ventilation activities, at least two ladders must be raised to the roof. Depending on access, the aerial ladder can be positioned to the roof and a ground ladder placed as a secondary means of egress. One large opening should be made rather than two smaller ones. Care shall be taken not to cut or damage the supporting roof support systems. If the roof shows conditions of collapse (sagging, separation of roof and walls, large cracks or openings around ducts, chimneys, etc.) command must be notified at once. Once the opening(s) have been made, be sure to remove any ceilings to ensure ventilation is accomplished in the attic or upper most floors. Once ventilation is complete, retreat from the roof and notify command that ventilation is complete.

Positive pressure ventilation is highly recommended if possible.

Fire that extends to attics must be controlled quickly. Ventilation of the roof is essential. Venting of the roof should be performed directly over, or as close as SAFELY possible to the fire. In fires that are extremely smoky, roof ventilation should be performed over stairwells or hallways to clear these areas of smoke and toxic gases.

When roof ventilation is performed, it shall be performed with a minimum number of two firefighters in full protective equipment, including SCBA. The following equipment shall be considered standard equipment to be taken to the roof at all times:

- a. Pick-Headed Axes
- b. Pike Poles
- c. Power saws
- d. Rope
- e. Flashlights
- f. Roof Ladders(s)
- g. Radio
- h. Charged Hoseline for Firefighter protection only

**15.0618 Secondary Search:**

As soon as the Incident Commander has declared the fire under control, a secondary search must be made of the fire building. All areas should be checked thoroughly for anyone who may have survived the fire or for any victims who may have been missed during the primary search. The Company Officer assigned to the search shall inform the Incident Commander that the secondary search has been completed.

**15.0619 Utility Control:**

All utilities with the exception of natural gas shall be controlled by the appropriate utility companies. One firefighter must be assigned to close the gas valve off at the meter if a fire is found. The valve can normally be found on the lower left side of the meter at or near grade level.

**15.0620 Property Conservation:**

Property conservation measures should begin as soon as possible to reduce the property loss by fire, heat, and smoke. Property conservation efforts are to be performed by personnel when staffing levels and conditions permit salvage operations to begin. Salvage covers should be used to protect valuables and to prevent further damage by water and smoke.

**15.0621 Forcible Entry:**

All company firefighters should be prepared to perform forcible entry. All firefighters must have forcible entry equipment such as axes, pike poles, pry bars, and halligan tools. Entry must be made in the quickest and most cost-effective manner.

**15.0622 Overhaul:**

When the fire has been confined and/or declared under control, overhaul efforts should begin. At least one handline shall remain in service during overhaul. Overhaul will be continued at the discretion of the incident commander. Ladder/Rescue company personnel will assist engine company personnel with the task of overhaul. Ladder/Rescue company personnel must pull walls and ceilings that have been exposed to fire to prevent a rekindle. Use of the thermal imaging camera is essential during overhaul to spot hidden fire without having to open all the walls and ceilings within the structure.

**15.0623 Safety:**

The safety of fire department personnel is of the utmost concern. No member shall be permitted to take part in fire suppression activities unless that person is wearing full protective clothing including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). SCBAs shall be worn at all times on the interior of the building during fire suppression activities—including during overhaul. SCBAs shall be worn until it can be determined that the level of carbon monoxide in the structure is at a safe level. At that time the Incident Commander can grant permission to the operating crews to remove their SCBAs.

All injuries to fire fighters shall be reported immediately to the company officer and required medical attention given.

**15.0624 Crew Units:**

Crews are to stay together. If their Company Officer is assigned another detail, a crew leader will be first designated.

**15.0625 Greater Alarms:**

The event of a working fire in a multi-family dwelling, a minimum of an additional ladder company and an additional engine company should be requested and staged until needed.

