

Standard Operating Guidelines

Guideline 409.0 Chimney Fires



Purpose:

During the cooler months and during holidays home owners like to warm their homes by burning wood in their wood furnaces or fireplaces. Unfortunately improper wood being burnt or improper care and maintenance can lead to fires in the flues and chimneys. There is an additional potential for a fire that begins in the chimney area to extend into the structure of the home.

This Standard Operating Guideline is designed to offer those firefighters on the scene of a chimney fire options to use in the extinguishment of those fires.

Guideline:

Safety:

- Firefighters involved in the actual roof operations around the chimney should wear an SCBA to protect themselves from smoke and possible heat.
- Firefighters should never look up in a chimney without eye protection from their face shield and or safety glasses. Use the mirror technique.
- Avoid laddering chimneys due to collapse possibility.
- Watch out for entrance electrical wires, chances are they will be in the vicinity of the chimney.
- Use a roof ladder, harness and fall protection were possible when working on a roof.

Tactical Actions:

Several possibilities are available for use in order to extinguish chimney fires. The Officer in charge will determine the best course of action based on the size up if the incident.

- No action necessary, except to monitor and overhaul, this result is from the fact that there is little or no heat in the chimney, or the fire has burnt itself out.
- Put fire out in appliance by closing off air supply and using ABC powder.

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- Applying a small amount of water (1 or 2 glasses), directly on the hot coals. The water will turn into steam and help extinguish the fire in the flue.
- Burning wood may be removed from the appliance if the chimney is blocked and resulting in smoke damage in the building.
- ABC powder introduced at the bottom of the chimney, take great care when doing this to prevent respiratory damage to the firefighter.
- ABC powder contained in the special "baggies" dropped down the chimney.

After the use of the above tactical possibilities have been exhausted, it may be necessary to use the chain and weight to clean remaining fire from the chimney walls.

Property Conservation:

- Salvage covers, fire blankets, and or floor runners shall be used where possible to prevent damage to carpeting and flooring.
- Windows can be opened if needed to provide horizontal ventilation, to quickly clear smoke.
- Use Positive Pressure Ventilation.
- Every possible effort should be made to keep the smoke pipe system together as long as there is fire in the firebox.

The home owner shall be notified, not to use the chimney or appliance until inspected by a certified person.

The Incident Commander will verify the fire is out and that the house has been left in an acceptable condition before leaving the site.