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Report of the Week

The room went boom!

09/02/2010

Report Number: 10-0001034

Report Date: 08/05/2010 16:34

Synopsis

Fire flashes on overhaul crew.

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Fire Fighter

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 4 - 6

Region: FEMA Region VII

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

Event type: Fire emergency event: structure fire, vehicle fire, wildland fire, etc.

Event date and time: 02/02/2008 21:00

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event: Clear and Dry

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Situational Awareness
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Decision Making

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury

Event Description

Brackets [] denote reviewer de-identification.

We responded to a structure fire at a 3-story wood-frame home. Upon arrival we found fire located on the first floor in the kitchen. I was assigned to Truck [1] which was the second due truck to the fire. The main body of fire was extinguished and overhaul was initiated to look for fire extension. I was partnered up with the driver of Truck [2] and assigned to the third floor. We opened up the wall on the B-side of the building and found a small fire. There were a total of 6 firefighters by this time in the area of this fire and 2 crews left due to heat conditions. The fire then either flashed over, flamed over or a backdraft occurred, and firefighters outside reported visible fire from the 3rd floor. The room became very hot with smoke banking down to the floor and I proceeded to spray water everywhere and put out the fire. My partner was within arm's length to me during the event but was unaware of my location.

The room went boom!

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Lessons Learned

I learned that I need situational awareness regardless of how small or big the fire is. Better communication with my partner & command was needed as well. Next time I'm lost or unaware of where I am at, I will follow the hoseline.

Discussion Questions

The lessons learned section of [10-1034](#) mentions maintaining situational awareness and accountability. When fire is discovered in a confined space, no matter how small or lazy it appears, it must be extinguished quickly. We have no real way of knowing how long it has been smoldering or burning because if it is in a concealed space the opening we make to discover the fire actually creates the top of a burning chimney. Once you have read the entire account of [10-1034](#) and the related reports, consider the following:

1. What equipment do you consider the minimum for handling fire in concealed spaces?
2. Based on the description in [10-1034](#), would you describe the phenomenon as a backdraft or flashover? What leads you to your conclusion?
3. How often are you partnered with a member from another unit?
4. The thicker and darker the smoke, the (more or less) combustible it is.
5. When opening walls and ceilings, which type of hook (pike pole, drywall, all purpose, etc.) do you prefer and why?

Related Reports – Topical Relation: Backdraft

[05-575](#)

[06-049](#)

[08-449](#)

[08-344](#)

[09-560](#)

Note: The questions posed by the reviewers are designed to generate discussion and thought in the name of promoting firefighter safety. They are not intended to pass judgment on the actions and performance of individuals in the reports.