



BFFA'S FIRE OPS 101

SEARCH & RESCUE OPERATIONS

The primary mission of the fire service is dedication to saving lives and property. Search and Rescue is a vital component of working in life-threatening situations. Firefighters must be thoroughly prepared at all times should they encounter a rescue situation.

Rescues are generally an extremely complex process. These situations are often extremely dangerous and labor intensive for rescue personnel. They demand an application of knowledge, skill, and teamwork, which are developed and maintained through training and experience over the duration of a firefighter's career. Firefighters will only stay proficient at this skill if a constant reinforcement of training is provided throughout ones career.

Some of the most common scenarios which firefighters perform rescues in are:

- Inside or around a structure fire,
- After a vehicle accident,
- High & low angle rope rescue,
- Hazardous Materials releases or spills,
- Confined spaces such as those found in city infrastructure & industrial plants,
- Trench rescue (most commonly found at construction sites),
- Structural collapse rescue (from earthquake, explosion or fire),
- Water rescue (which includes: open, flood & swift water)
- Disabled boat rescues.

Now that you have a sense of the potential for entrapment in everyday life, you should understand why there is such an emphasis on having properly operating equipment with operators who are constantly training and drilling. What you will learn today is just a taste of the amount of information that someone assigned to a Truck Company must be proficient in.

A significant factor that affects our ability to perform Search & Rescue is called "Two-In/Two-Out". This mandate, established by Cal-OSHA (Title 8, Section 5144) stipulates there must be a minimum of four fire fighters, with full personal protective equipment, on scene before anyone makes entry into a structural fire. When 2 fire fighters do make entry it is required to have 2 fire fighters outside the building in a ready state throughout the incident.

The Berkeley Fire Department staffs their engines and trucks with 3 personnel per apparatus. Therefore at least two apparatus must be on scene to comply with this regulation prior to making entry. Many of our neighboring departments run with the National Standard of 4 personnel on an engine and truck company to specifically comply with this OSHA regulation which delays the entry of the search & rescue team in to a structure.