

BOX

585

A MAGAZINE FOR 585 FIREFIGHTERS



2020 - ISSUE 2

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Photo: Jeff Arnold

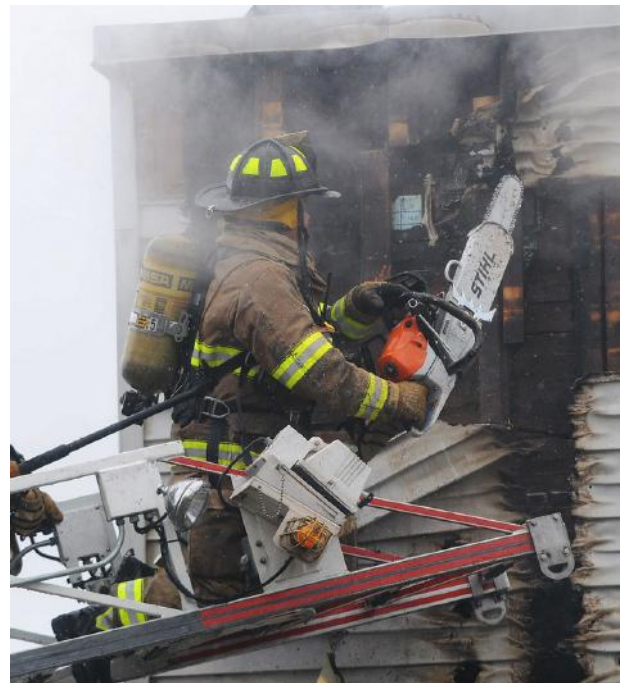


Photo: Jack Haley

BOX 585 FIRE TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE LLC

Welcome new readers and welcome back to those who enjoyed Issue 1! We are pleased to bring you the 2nd edition of Box 585 Magazine. Our first issue was viewed by over 2,000 unique users and we have a growing subscription list. Thank you for the positive feedback and we will continue to provide the quarterly magazine for 585 firefighters, by 585 firefighters.

Check out our website www.box585fire.com. As the fire service begins the "new normal" post COVID-19 lockdown, we will be posting all local state/county training classes, seminars, and all events in the 585.

For example, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation will be hosting the 2020 Rochester 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb and Family Walk on September 12th at Frontier Field. Box 585 will have a team set up for the event and a donation to our team or any team would be greatly appreciated. Please consider donating to the event and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. We hope to see you there!

As always, if you would like to contribute an article, advertise your latest products and promotions, or have an event/fundraiser, drop us a line on our website and we will post it online and in the quarterly magazine. We are a resource for all area departments.

Enjoy!

Chuck Hammon
Founder of Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC
www.box585fire.com

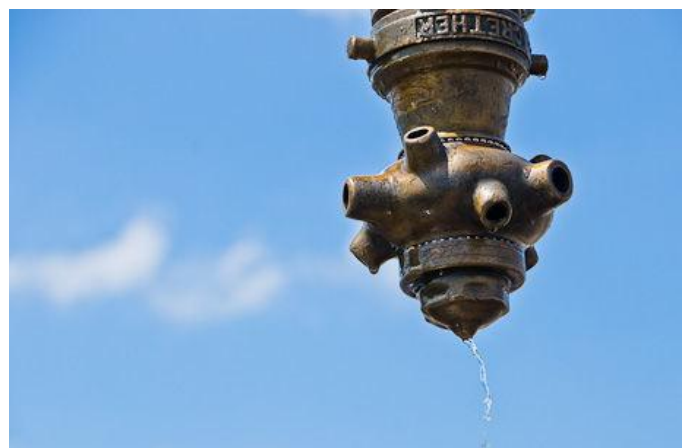


THE FRONT COVER



Photo: John Spaulding

THE BACK COVER



*The Bresnan Distributor Nozzle
Photo: Howard Owens of TheBatavian.com*

FORCED BACK TO THE BASICS

BY LOUIS A. COMENALE III

The past two years I have had the honor to be the Municipal Training Officer (MTO) for my department. The MTO is the officer that ensures all the administration work for training is done properly; if new equipment is issued the MTO may also facilitate training. I tend to take a more hands on approach to all training. The first year I attended close to 90% of drills conducted in the department, as well as instructing or assisting in every volunteer drill.

Being a young, growing, and busy department, both my Chief and Assistant Chief require me to respond to certain calls on and off duty. These calls range from all structure fires to hazardous materials calls within a structure. The reasoning for me to go on calls was to observe the calls and if there were issues try to correct them through the in-service training. Knowing the manpower daily, upon arriving on scene I had a good idea if I was going to be put to work by marrying up with a company that was short an officer for the shift. Typically, the officer of shotgun (right front seat) carries the thermal imaging camera (TIC). My take home department vehicle does not have a TIC.

That being said, every fire in 2 years up to the last fire, a mutual aid fire, I performed first due work without the aide of a TIC. The first fire that I responded to as the MTO was a kitchen fire in a one and a half story cape cod. The fire had a significant head start, the homeowners were not home at the time and a massive pine tree hid the house from the street. The neighbors called the alarm in with a smell of smoke in from the house and the smoke detectors going off. I arrived shortly after the first due engine, who was at the time stretching a line to division 1 with an aggressive interior attack. Hustling up to the command post the chief gave me order to marry up with another crew and perform a primary search on division 2. The "crew" I married up with was a 20-year veteran on the volunteer side of the house, a solid fireman



Photo: Gates Fire District Headquarters Facebook Page

with a lot of experience. Making the stairs was relatively easy take since they were directly inside the front door. At the top of the stairs we were met with a dense smoke condition and moderate heat. We conducted a right hand orientated primary search. Division 2 consisted of 3 bedrooms and a bathroom. Upon making the master bedroom which, consequently, was above the main body of fire heat conditions started to increase. We did a quick search of the room and vented the windows as we searched, the smoke condition lifted but the heat was still increasing. While searching around the bed, probing with one foot and tools, a hole in the floor was discovered at the foot of the bed and on the left side. This was communicated to command and the primary search was complete with negative results. All of this happened in less than 4 minutes. Once the main body of fire was knocked down we re-entered division 2 to check for extension and still were noticing high heat, after moving the bed we found the box spring was on fire, a line was called up to division 2 and the fire was extinguished, the mutual aid truck company on the roof, side Charlie, found minor extension in a knee wall area as well behind that bed.

Reflecting on that fire, which I do on every fire, it dawned on me that it was the first fire in 4 years that I did not have a thermal image camera. I had to rely on fundamental search skills acquired over time starting during Fire Fighter I. I came to the conclusion that having a T.I.C. was a luxury, but searches can still be accomplished without new technology, we just need to train so it becomes second nature, or muscle memory.

Fast forward two years, an Engine Company from my department was requested mutual aid for a working fire in the same type of wood frame private dwelling, one and a half story cape cod. We were ordered to do a primary search on division 2. Once again, I did not have a T.I.C. but the officer of the Engine Company did. Making entry through the front door the fire was being aggressively attacked from a well-trained engine company, we were met with moderate smoke and moderate heat. The officer of our engine company seemed to have tunnel vision through the T.I.C. I noticed that his fireman and myself were moving at a much faster pace and staying low whereas the officer was cautiously moving about division 1 guiding himself through the 4X6 inch screen on the T.I.C.

Doing a "hotwash" of this fire with just our Engine Company the officer noticed how fast we were moving through the structure. He admitted that he could see us through the T.I.C. but just could not keep up. We discussed it a little and we concluded that the T.I.C. is nice for a quick reference but still tired and true search tactics are faster and more efficient.

This notion of the T.I.C. was cemented in my mind a month later, responding to another mutual aid fire, the Chief of the department handed me a T.I.C. to perform a search. Quickly I became drawn into just looking into the screen. I quickly fell behind the fire fighter I was searching with. Once making the stairs I left the camera hanging on my pack and went back to basic tactics. I did bring the camera up occasionally keep accountability with my fire fighter, but I was not primarily using it for search.



Photo by Author

The T.I.C. is a tool, it should not every be a replacement for tried and true tactics. Batteries fail, screens crack, lanyards break, the tool gets left on the truck. The T.I.C. should be a supplement to your senses, it should enhance accountability of your company. If you start feeling an increase in heat, the T.I.C. should be able to confirm what you are feeling. If you and your company train on basic aggressive interior search skills, speed, accuracy and efficient in primary search skills in private dwellings will improve exponentially.



*Photo: Gates Firefighters IAFF Local 3792
Facebook Page*



Photo: Gates Firefighters IAFF Local 3792 Facebook Page

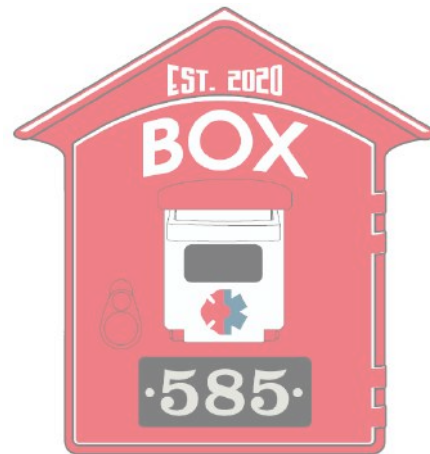
The simplest way to force the company to search without a T.I.C. is not allow them to use the T.I.C. during training evolutions. A more practical way is to provide them a T.I.C. with an almost dead battery. I like to use the dead battery evolution because the officer has the sense of security of having the T.I.C. at the start but the battery will quickly die off and will be forced to use his basic skills. While searching or observing your companies search remind them being in "contact" does not mean physically contacting their partner, they should not look like the Ringling Brothers Elephants marching down Broadway.

Being in contact can be verbal or if conditions permit, visual. Companies that are lucky enough to have a three-person search crew the officer can stay in a central location while the fire fighters break off individually and search separate rooms. A normal bedroom for a 1000 – 2500 square foot house is 10x12 feet, 20x20 for a master. Put in a dresser, bed, desk, or other furniture the space for a fire fighter in full PPE is drastically decreased. Putting two fire fighters in a bedroom because cumbersome and inefficient.

When drilling or training on search procedures remember points of interest to search. Children will hide, Snohomish County WA FD found a child hiding in a toy chest filled with stuffed animals April 19, 2020. Geriatrics

tend to shelter in bathrooms, Gates Fire rescued an elderly male in December of 2019 face down in a bathroom. Adults will be at windows or common routes of travel. Mothers will be protecting their children, emphasize upon finding an adult be sure to check under the adult before doing any rough maneuvers to remove the victim. The greatest feeling a fire fighter can have is saving a life they are sworn to protect, accomplishing this task at a structure fire makes the accomplishment that more rewarding.

Searching without a hose line is one, if not, the most dangerous task on the fire ground. The advent of the T.I.C. has made it a little safer, but we still need to rely on training, experience, and competent company officers or senior fire fighters. Real life experience is not controlled, what we can control is how we train, how much we train, and how hard we train. There are also experiences to be gained from training. I encourage everyone to remember the basics especially when it comes to an aggressive interior search,



Louis A. Comenale III is a lieutenant and municipal training officer with the Gates Fire District. He is an instructor with Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC. He is a third-generation firefighter. He is a New York State Fire Instructor and a nationally certified Fire Service Instructor II. Lou has an associate degree in Fire Protection Technology.

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QUICK INITIAL COMPANY OPERATIONS DRILL

BY MARK QUILL

As a company officer or training officer one of the biggest conundrums we often face is how do we hold training or a drill that will hold our members attention. Additionally, we want to make sure our personnel are gaining very essential repetitions on those fundamental skills we all need to be successful on the fireground without tying up multiple companies or units for prolonged periods of time.

Oftentimes, to allow our personnel to have "real life" training experiences we must attend conferences or trade shows, obtain acquired structures, or at local training centers. While in our area we are fortunate to have a topnotch training center, time is often our enemy in its use. Time is our enemy in this situation due to the time it takes our personnel and apparatus out of our response areas. Also we will need to schedule the use of the facility, backfill any needed personnel, or request coverage from our neighboring departments along with plan for the various scenarios that we will participate in while at the training center.

While this is all time well spent, especially due to it being spent on training, it sometimes is just not possible or feasible to participate in these types of drills or evolutions. Yet we still want our personnel to receive timely and relevant training. To do this we must think outside the traditional "box" and come up with ways to solve this problem.



Photo by Jack Haley

A quick, safe, and efficient way to ensure our personnel are receiving the needed repetitions they need yet not tying up personnel etc. as mentioned previously is conducting Quick Initial Company Operation Drills. The purpose of these drills is just as their title describes Quick drills focused on the tasks a company or companies will face when they initially arrive on scene. For the most part Engine Companies would focus on Engine Company tasks while Ladder Companies would focus on Ladder Company operations.

Additionally, these tasks can be broken down based on riding position(s) and what their responsibilities on the fireground would be. An Engine Company could focus on the following evolutions.

Engine Company Driver

Secure water supply and charge the initial attack line

Engine Company Officer

Conduct a 360° size up

Engine Company Firefighter

Stretch and flake out the initial attack lines

Engine Company Firefighter

Flake out attack line



Photo by Author

In turn a Ladder Company could focus on the following evolutions.

Ladder Company Driver
Position and set up Aerial Device

Ladder Company Officer
Force Entry, Search

Ladder Company Firefighter
Force Entry, Search

Ladder Company Firefighter
Ground Ladders to the "A" and "C" side of the structure



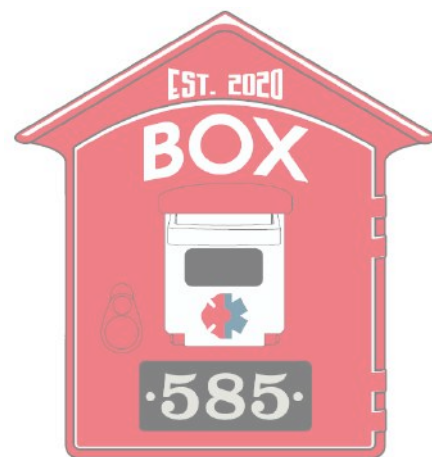
Photo by Author

These evolutions are based on four person companies, something we are generally not afforded in our area. These evolutions, and assignments can be altered to your departments staffing and identified fireground tasks.

These drills can be essentially anywhere in your district or response area. Large commercial parking lots or buildings, school playgrounds, parks or anywhere your imagination takes you. One place commonly used by my department is our roof simulator building behind our Headquarters fire station. This location allows for multiple different evolutions and does not interfere with day to day operations of the District.

The most important facet of drills of this type is that they are quick. These drills can be run essentially in ten to fifteen minutes. As the title describes these drills are to focus on initial company operations, essentially the first five minutes of an incident, these do not need to be long drills that extensive planning. If the company officer elects to run one of these drills, they can rotate members into the various positions/assignments on their apparatus. This allows all members to participate in evolutions and obtain a better grasp of all the different roles and how the successful operation of the company depends on the all personnel working together as a team.

An often repeated saying regarding the fireground states "The first five minutes will determine the next five hours." This statement displays the importance of initial company operations and how they have a direct impact on whether we are successful of the fireground or not. Running these drills afford us the opportunity to hone our skills which directly correlates to successful operations on the fire ground, this in turn sets our personnel up in a position for positive outcomes which is what the public expects from us on a day to day.



Mark Quill is a captain and Municipal Training Officer (MTO) with the Ridge Road Fire District. He is an instructor with Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC. Mark is a New York State Fire Instructor and teaches at the New York State Fire Academy's Recruit Firefighter Training Program (RFFT). He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Managing Officer Program.

THE WORST CASE SCENARIO

PART 1: PACKAGING

BY CHUCK HAMMON

In October of 2019, I completed the 2-year Managing Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. At the conclusion of the on-campus course work, each Managing Officer student must complete a capstone project based a training and/or performance deficiency that is present in the fire service. The capstone project allowed me the opportunity to research and study the rapid intervention model that currently exists in our area and at the national level. The glaring findings were that the highest percentage of firefighter maydays were mitigated by members other than the RIT/FAST team. This several part article series, on preparing for the "Worst-Case Scenario," will hopefully shed light on the training and operational needs that can save your or a member of your company's life.

The Worst-Case Scenario

"Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "worst-case" as "involving, projecting, or providing for the worst possible circumstances or outcome of a given situation" (Merriam-Webster). "Worst-case" for the fire service is firefighters engaging in an immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) environment, in which an emergency is experienced, warranting self-rescue tactics or rapid intervention. Although a formal RIT has traditionally trained for these occurrences, ultimately it may be resolved by the individual experiencing the emergency, the individual's partner/crew, or on-scene units engaging in activities on the fireground. (Hammon, 2019)"

Project Mayday

Don Abbott's Project Mayday should be required reading for all firefighters. To date, his compilation of data on thousands of mayday incidents can immediately shed light on the importance of self-rescue techniques and the need for all firefighters to be trained in rapid intervention, regardless if they are part of a formal RIT/FAST team. In his 2019 document release, he highlights the following:

- Over half of maydays events take place between midnight and 0600 hours
- 57% of mayday events involve the first unit operating on scene
- A crew size of 3 members occurred 41% of the recorded mayday events and he contributed splitting up, crew members coming off the hose line, and tunnel vision as the prominent causes.
- 57% of mayday events occurred when no 360 size-up was performed
- 44% of mayday events occurred in residential structures and 40% in apartment buildings.
- Only 49% of members reported to have mayday training in the last 24 months

COMPONENT 2: Mayday Rescues		
MAYDAY RESCUE		
• Self-rescue	2,103	35.5%
• Victim's Crew	1,677	26.1%
• Interior Crew	1,385	25.3%
• RIT	349	6.6%
• Other	306	6%

MAYDAY LOCATIONS		
• Residential	2,437	44.3%
• Multi-Occupancy	1,283	23.3%
• Commercial	2,187	39.8%

Don Abbott's Project Mayday
projectmayday.net

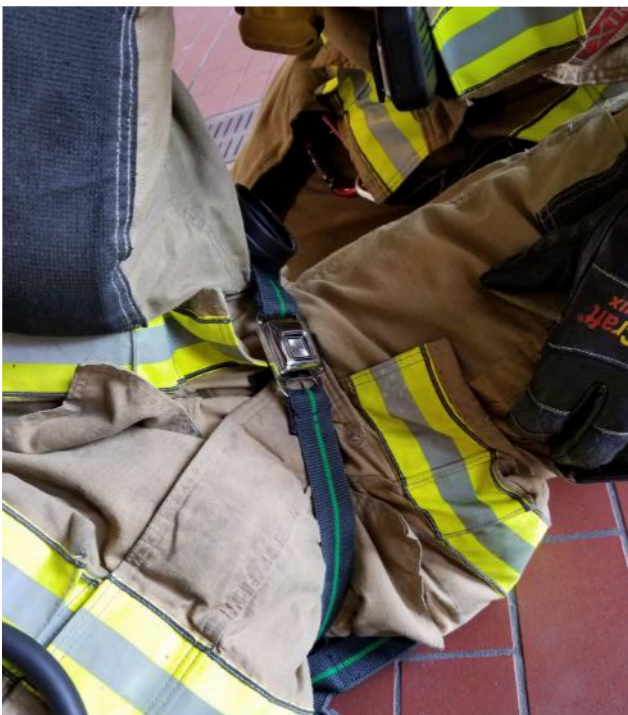
The data goes on and on but a significant take away was his findings on who completed the rescue of maydays. Roughly 87% of mayday rescues were self-rescues, the firefighter's crew, or another interior crew operating. Less than 7% of the mayday rescues were completed by a formal RIT/FAST. This demonstrates the **absolute** need for all members to practice self-rescue and rapid intervention tactics on a regular basis in addition to the formal RIT/FAST team setting.

Part 1: Packaging

Whatever the cause for the firefighter to be injured or to become incapacitated, packaging the firefighter for extraction is vitally important. In this article we will discuss techniques to quickly package a firefighter for removal. The topic of providing a supplied breathing air pack will be a discussion for another article. A grim conversation we must also have with ourselves is are we prepared to perform packaging techniques on ourselves? We whole heartedly believe in fighting for our own survival but there are rare conditions in which we may need to perform these tactics on ourselves to aid in our own crew members ability to remove us.

The Standard: SCBA into a Harness Conversion

Taught in the state's Firefighter Assist and Search Team curriculum, and nationally, is the re-routing of the SCBA waist strap through the groin to create a makeshift class 3 rescue harness for horizontal or vertical removals. This should be practiced regularly in low-light, no-light scenarios to maintain proficiency. Of course, firefighters come in all shapes and sizes, so we need to practice on even the most difficult conversions. Some departments have belt extender devices in their RIT Kits, but we are focusing on the quick, initial packaging of you or your crew member.



The Standard Conversion

With the mandated bailout law, firefighters are, for the most part, wearing Class 1 (a belt only style) or Class 2 (internal or external; belt and leg loops style) harnesses. No matter the brand, familiarity of how to quickly package a firefighter differs from each style.

Class 2 Harness with an Extra-Large Carabiner

The quickest SCBA to full-body harness conversion can be performed on those that have a Class 2 harness with the extra-large carabiner attached. Often the carabiner is bound close to the body to prevent swaying while operating but it can easily be pulled out straight into a "A" frame design used for ladder rung attachment or rope rescue techniques. Simply pull the carabiner out and hook both shoulder straps of the SCBA. Tighten down the shoulder straps and for emergencies tie knots in the shoulder straps below the cinch buckles.



Class 2 with XL Carabiner Conversion Class 2 Harness only, no XL carabiner

Whether internal or external, the harness can quickly be utilized with the SCBA waist strap for a full-body harness. Unclip the SCBA waist belt clip, route it through the front of the harness belt, and tighten down every strap. When pulled (horizontally or vertically) the slack will be taken out of the system and the leg loops will take most of weight.

Internal Harness Conversions



Class 2 without a XL carabiner Conversion

Class 1 Harness

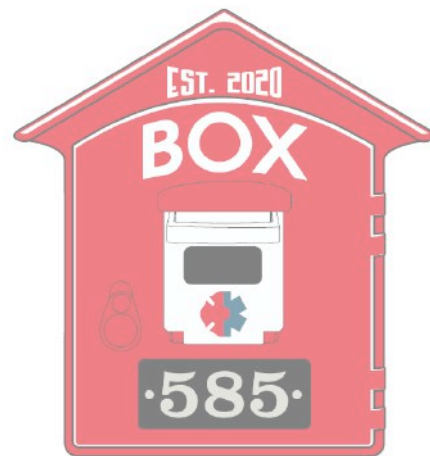
The trend of area firefighters is going away from the "cumbersome" leg loops of the Class 2 harness and has allowed for just a belt as part of the bailout kit. This puts stress on the posterior hips when loaded and because it does not harness the legs, you will need to use the "Standard" SCBA conversion of routing the SCBA waist strap through the groin. One improvement can be to route one end of the SCBA waist strap underneath the Class 1 belt before connecting to the other end as it goes through the groin. This ensures the class 1 belt is not pinned to the body, allowing attachment of the RIT air supply pack or a convenient grab handle for horizontal movement.



Class 1 (just a belt) Conversion

We spend a tremendous amount of time on the various firefighter skills and tactics but because we can often view ourselves as "invisible" we do not spend the time on considering our own survival or that of our brothers/sisters. If you have completed the firefighter survival and RIT/FAST programs, you know the basics but those skills should be practiced until you cannot get them wrong. Packaging/conversions are quick drills that should be done as often as facepiece door donning, ladder throws, and other proven life saving skills.

Look at the Project Mayday information and prepare for the "worst-case scenario." See you next issue for Part 2 on considerations of the RIT air supply and horizontal movements.



Chuck Hammon is a lieutenant with the Henrietta Fire District. He is the founder of Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC. Chuck is a New York State Fire Instructor and has a bachelor's degree in Fire Service Administration. He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Managing Fire Officer Program, an IAFF Peer Fitness Trainer, and began his career with the City of Batavia Fire Department.

Summary

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LISTENING IS PART OF BEING A LEADER

BY LOUIS A. COMENALE III

Early on in my career, I am not to admit I was very immature. Just like most probationary firemen fresh out of the academy I thought I had all the answers. My immaturity not only was in my attitude but most everything else, this includes listening. To be clear there is a difference between hearing, listening, and active listening. In the beginning, I heard things like my children hear things, most parents or teachers that deal with children call this "selective hearing." Most people understand what selective hearing is, this is where you hear what you want to hear or only pick up keywords. When you hear or selective hear, you will miss the message or instruction. Not listening in the firehouse during any task can lead to mistrust. If you cannot listen to simple directions on house duties how can your company trust you to follow orders in a life or death situation? Once I learned that I was not the smartest in the room I felt like I began to listen, but this listening was not active listening. I was listening but only listening to prove my point. I wasn't listening to what anyone had to say, I was still being very immature in my profession, I still had that I know more attitude.

I cannot pinpoint the time in my career, there was a turning point, a point when I listened. I actively listened to what people were saying. It could have been the Chief of the department or the newest member that was just hired (lately I think I have gone too far this way and am not as assertive if I need to speak up more on that). Who was I to say that what these people were telling me wasn't valid? Not until I was selected to be on interview committees did, I have any understanding of the new guy's background. Maybe they worked for a framer in their former profession and had a lot to offer regarding building construction on residential housing in the area. I should not have to explain why you should be listening to Chief Officers, for one thing, they most likely

have been in the game longer than you have, and two they are the Chief for a reason.



Photo by Guy Zampatori Jr.

Active listening is a skill that takes practice, it takes patience, and it takes maturity. In the technological day in age, we live in it is very easy to be distracted as well even if you are actively listening. Once I got promoted and was able to have an office, albeit a shared office, I opted for a computer station that faced the wall. Most people wanted the computer station to face the door so no one could sneak up on them, I didn't care. There was a more important reason to have my computer station facing the wall if one of my members came into my office to discuss something with me, no matter how big or small I was forced to turn around, disconnect from my screen and actively listen. By not having the screen in front of me my members had my full attention, and when they spoke I didn't speak I listened. In my new position as the Municipal Training Officer for my department, I have taken on more of an administrative role which requires a lot of emails and phone calls, even off duty.

I still try, even though struggle sometimes, to not look at my phone if one of the firefighters or officers strikes up a conversation in passing. If a message comes in during a conversation, I reiterate that I am listening, or sometimes if the call or message is important, I excuse myself, this is just good manners. Good manners breeds respect, with respect your leadership capital increases. Leadership is the solution to all problems. Without leadership you have nothing, chaos, freelancing, bad firefighting ensues. Active listening is a small step to enhance your leadership among your members.

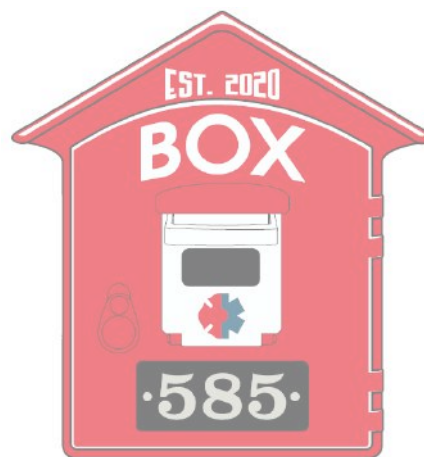
Leaders need to listen and be prepared for your time to be consumed depending on who you are listening to. One of the members of my fire department loves college football, love might be not strong enough, I love college football, but not to these member's extent. I enjoy talking sports almost as much as I enjoy talking shop. I know if I bring up college football and how his team is doing our how our teams did against each other I understand I am in for a least thirty minutes for a lecture on how the coach is good or bad or maybe a detailed conversation in how the offensive coordinator blew the third and three call in the fourth quarter. If I were to show no interest in the conversation off or not actively listen, what will that do for me in the future if I need to call on this individual for something? What if I need him to listen to me regarding a more important issue? Some might call this building leadership capital; listening is an investment in your leadership capital.

Leadership capital is a term thrown around by many "leadership experts." The simplest way for me to explain what leadership capital is to compare it to a savings account. Every time a leader makes a decision or does something for their members gives an order, really anything that reflects upon the company and its members is a deposit into or a withdrawal from the savings account. The more leadership capital you have the bigger the savings account grows. Leaders always want to make deposits into the account as frequently as possible and the easiest way I have found is to be an active listener.



Photo by Guy Zampatori Jr.

Listening is something we have been told to do since the time we could communicate with our parents. I can vividly remember my mother asking me if I was listening, I probably wasn't, I find myself asking my children the same question. Growing up and maturing I felt like I could turn on and off my listening, then not until I matured in the fire service did I realize that I should be actively listening to all the time.



Louis A. Comenale III is a lieutenant and municipal training officer with the Gates Fire District. He is an instructor with Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC. He is a third-generation firefighter. He is a New York State Fire Instructor and a nationally certified Fire Service Instructor II. Lou has an associate degree in Fire Protection Technology.

TACTICAL WORKSHEETS FOR INCIDENT COMMAND

BY JARED MEEKER

I might have been one of those teenagers that scribbled certain test answers on my arm to help get me through those mid-term exams back in high school. Looking back at it now it was not a good idea or one that I am proud of, I just needed a little help or some type of a checklist to help me remember those important things.

As a fire service leader I still like the idea of a checklist to help me remember all the necessary tasks and assignments that need completed at a major incident, especially at 2:00 in the morning when being awakened from a sound sleep.

I started out with a small checklist that fit into my front radio pocket of my turnout coat. This pocket guide listed the majority of the necessary tasks that will need to be completed at a structure fire. I listed the obvious ones like assigning divisions and securing each of the utilities (gas/electric/water) to the not so obvious to remember like establishing the 2nd water supply and additional ladders to the upper floor windows.



All photos by Author

The pocket guide allowed me to glance at the list of tasks to help me stay on point of the mission of running a safe and efficient fireground as a young incident commander. The pocket guide worked great in my roles as a Lieutenant or Captain when a Fire Chief would then arrive and assume the role of the Incident Commander. Once I rose through the ranks to a Fire Chief position my pocket guide expanded into a much larger tactical worksheet. There are many generic tactical worksheets found out there, and now even electronic versions, but I wanted one that was adapted to my organization and my role as an incident commander.

For a successful fireground operation the incident commander must continually be thinking several steps ahead of the incident, planning resources and tasks that will need attention for a successful and safe incident. A tactical worksheet is vital to providing reminders or prompts for tracking those necessary tasks, the companies or the apparatus role to help the flow of the incident. A tactical worksheet or checklist will never make the decision for the incident commander but provide a memory jogger or a quick reference to make sure you and the incident are staying on track. For those new incident commanders a tactical worksheet can be a great assistance in maintaining focus on the required tasks to gain comfort in the role as the incident commander.

A tactical worksheet is essential during a mayday event on the fireground when your heart rate and blood pressure instantly rise when hearing those words mayday, mayday, mayday. Having all the steps an incident commander will need during a mayday event already listed on the tactical worksheet for you to follow can become invaluable when struggling with the emotion of knowing that one of your firefighters is in trouble.



Face the facts, unless you are an incident commander running structure fires every week, and the required tasks are engraved in your mind, you might need help by using a pocket guide or tactical worksheet as a little reminder to help build up your muscle memory to make you a better incident commander.

As an incident commander never pay more attention to the tactical worksheet than the actual incident conditions. Your primary responsibility is to manage the overall incident safely, don't let the tactical worksheet become a distraction from continually monitoring the ever changing conditions of the fireground.

The tactical worksheet is a valuable tool when transferring command on the fireground. Those chief officers new to the incident can quickly evaluate the tactical worksheet and understand the need for additional resources, equipment or apparatus.

My pocket guide and tactical worksheet are both created on an excel spreadsheet and I will be glad to share them with you. Just add your fire department name across the top of the page, update the column of assigned apparatus that respond into your response area to make this tactical worksheet your very own. Start practicing using the tactical worksheet on your training nights to get all the line officers in your department comfortable using it before moving on to the jobs that you run. The more you use a tactical worksheet the more you get comfortable with it, then those items listed become second nature for you and the tactical worksheet is now just a reference guide to make sure you have completed each and every task that will need to be completed at a structure fire.

As an incident commander you must quickly size up an incident, then develop the strategy (offensive, defensive or a transition of both) and then develop the incident action plan on how to resolve it. These early decisions will be a big factor in the outcome of the incident. A tactical worksheet can be a valuable tool that helps the incident commander organize these tasks by providing reminders and prompts. Once the incident is completed the information gathered on the tactical worksheet can all be referenced when writing the incident report.

Jared Meeker has more than 30 years of fire service experience with 17 years as a chief officer and currently the Deputy Fire Chief of the Lake Shore Fire District in Greece NY. He is a contributing author to fire service publications and has instructed at fire conferences and individual fire departments with the topics of Size Up, FF/EMS Behavioral Health, as well as Incident Command-Size Up & Tactics For The First Due. Proud member of IAFC, ISFSI and the NYS AFC.

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MY DOG'S ADVICE TO THE PROBATIONARY FIREFIGHTER

BY ANDY YOUNG - VIGILANT FIRE SERVICE TRAINING, LLC

There are countless articles, books, posters and nowadays, even memes out there giving advice to new firefighters. Most of what is available is good advice. Clean the bathrooms, two ears one mouth, that sort of stuff. A lot of it can even be considered important information. I'd like to give you a different perspective on life as a Probationary Firefighter. That advice is to view your early years the same way that my dog, Leni views her entire life. Trust me, this will not be as weird as it sounds.



All photos by Author

I make every effort to take Leni on a walk every day. As soon as we leave the house, she is PUMPED to be on a new adventure with me. She has a tiny brain, so there is no way that she knows where we are going or what we are getting into, she's just happy to be on the adventure. Inevitably though, she stops 5 minutes into the walk and spends a remarkable amount of time sniffing some tree or grass (or name an object) and is not concerned about what lies ahead. She truly takes in the moment that she is living in.

When I first arrived at the Fire Academy, I was so focused on being the absolute best that I

could possibly be. It wasn't until around 5 or 6 weeks in that a fellow classmate said "why do you care so much? You'll still be a Probie at the end of this." Now, there is a bad message from that statement, but he is one of the better firemen that I know, so I'm going to focus on the good part.

It is important to put all of your effort into your job, however, there is a big advantage to enjoying each stage of your career. Now, a few years separated from the academy, I realize that I will never be so consumed in my job. Life will always get in the way. For the entire time I was there, all I needed to worry about was firefighting. I was with people that would become lifelong friends, learning a job that defines who I am, and having more fun than I ever realized. If I had spent my entire academy striving for the Valedictorian spot, I would have come out of it disappointed. Instead, I had an experience that I will not soon forget.

The same concept applies to your career. I have seen too many firefighters begin focusing on promotions as soon as they are eligible. To steal a quote from another firefighter, "I've seen a lot of firefighters cry at their own retirement parties, but I've never seen a Chief do the same". If I am being completely honest, I started to fall into this same trap. I was, for a time, focused on being promoted. Fortunately for me, I have found my way to back to loving my current job. You only get a short time to be a firefighter. You'll either promote or retire, either way, it'll come too soon. Enjoy every step of your career while you have the chance.

When I first got Leni, I already had a 6-year-old dog. That dog was a special animal. Leni came into the house as a puppy but Lexi (the older dog) already knew how things worked. Lexi knew when to sit, when to stay, how to get outside, how to get food. She knew when it was time to play and when it was time to relax a little. Leni watched Lexi every day and learned



I had a few senior firefighters during my first couple of years on the job. One, in particular taught me more just by leading by example. When you arrive at your new firehouse, there will be a routine. Chances are, the senior firefighter will be the one to dictate that. You'll hear all sorts of advice throughout the academy but nobody will teach you more about the day to day than the senior firefighter. Ask questions and listen closely but most of all, watch. A good senior firefighter will set the example every day and you can get a real understanding of what life as a firefighter truly entails. If you keep your head down and learn every little thing that you can, one day, your senior firefighter will say "nice job, kid." That phrase will mean more to you than just about anything else you accomplish in your career.

Something else that Leni learned from her Senior Dog, was how to play me. Often, I'll come home from work and Leni will stand over her food bowl and cry. I usually text my wife to ask if she fed the dogs. By the time I get a response, I've given in, filled the dish, and Leni ate a second breakfast.

Hopefully, your Senior Firefighter is teaching you a more honest approach to daily life at the firehouse but still teaching you some interesting tricks. Another senior firefighter of mine harped on a specific vehicle extrication

technique, known as "The B-Post Blowout." I heard about this technique, seemingly every single shift. I took it seriously, of course, but never truly appreciated it until we arrived on an MVA with entrapment in multiple cars. Using the B-Post Blowout, all patients were extricated in less than ten minutes. Nowadays, this is standard operating procedure in any vehicle extrication class. At the time, however, this was somewhat of a "trick of the trade." Those tricks will become invaluable to you as a firefighter and one day may help you to save a life.

Recently, I adopted a new puppy. I have seen a great deal of the same behaviors in her that I saw in Leni when she was young. The new pup learned, very quickly, how to tell me that she needs to pee. She is not quite there on the playtime versus relax time front, but I'm confident.

As I said before, this career is too short. Just like old dogs, all Senior Firefighters need to retire eventually. Leni took on the role of Senior Dog just as every Probie will one day take on the role of Senior Firefighter. Take advantage of your time as a new firefighter and learn everything that you can. One day, you will be called upon to pass that knowledge on to the next generation and it can be your chance to make a difference in your community, your department, or the fire service as a whole.



Andy Young is a career firefighter in Upstate New York. He is a nationally certified Fire Service Instructor II and works for Vigilant Fire Service Training, LLC.



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FIREFIGHTER HYDRATION TIPS

BY CHUCK HAMMON

Day 1 of the academy or night 1 of your first firefighter 1 class you are taught the importance of hydration and that discussion usually entails a list of recommendations to follow through out the course. Firefighters are always told to keep a filled container or bottle with them. For the purpose of this article we will use the term "vessel" to describe your personal water transportation device because maybe a new term will have a new appeal.

So why do we quickly forget the importance of hydration when we are taught it first and foremost in class? Because we take for granted the "why" we need to be hydrated (the work we will be doing) and "why" it is vitally important, as firefighters and human-beings, to maintain a hydrated body to perform at our optimal level (the body systems need for hydration to work as designed). I will not throw out terms like homeostasis or try to quickly explain VO2 max, but I will try to refresh your memory so you can maintain a healthy, hydrated body and so you can perform for the people you serve and those you serve with.

Hopefully, you are getting 7-9 hours of recommended, uninterrupted, sleep each night. Now think about it, would you go 7-9 hours during the day without some form of hydration? If you did, you would feel thirsty and that would prompt you to drink something (hopefully just water). But what if I told you thirst is usually a delayed sign of dehydration? At night, when sleeping, we are breathing off moisture in our exhalations. This can cause you to wake in a state of dehydration and if your first fluids of the morning are toothpaste and then coffee/tea then you are continuing the dehydration process.

Tip #1 - Drink 16 ounces of water when you first wake up, every morning.

Have a vessel by your bathroom sink and begin to rehydrate your body. You will notice the difference this will make. Body systems that laid dormant throughout the night will

"wake-up." You should feel rumbling, beginning in your abdomen, as your digestive tract now has the fluid it needs to aid in transportation of waste and boost metabolism.

One of the first symptoms of dehydration in the morning is delayed decision-making or "fuzziness." We usually combat this with a cup of coffee or tea. And yes caffeine helps fire up our cognitive machines but it also puts us even farther behind in terms of hydration. Drinking water first thing in the morning will help the blood flow to your brain, meaning better decision-making.

Tip #2 - Pee clear by lunch time

My college lacrosse coach would always emphasis this by telling the entire team we should have "clearish" urine well before practice and games to ensure hydration. Since it was taught to me, and it worked, when I started coaching varsity lacrosse, I would tell my players the same. Dehydration before athletic sessions leads to muscle cramping and decreased productivity as the body is not at the optimal level. There is nothing worse as a coach than watching your top players not perform well, especially when it was preventable. Same goes for our firefighters.

Urine Color	Possible Meaning
Clear	Good hydration, overhydration or mild dehydration
Pale Yellow	Good hydration or mild dehydration
Bright Yellow	Mild or moderate dehydration or taking vitamin supplements
Orange, Amber	Moderate or severe dehydration
Tea-Colored	Severe dehydration

Use Urine Color Charts to remind everyone in your firehouse. New York State Fire Academy.

Tip #3 - Balance your water intake throughout the day

Drink water throughout the day! It is recommended by the National Academy of Sports Medicine that men should drink 3 liters and women should drink 2.2 liters of water every day. This can be achieved by figuring out the ounces in your vessel of choice and evenly balancing that water intake throughout the day. We should not get to bedtime without consuming our recommended daily water intake and we should not play catchup before bed or that will result in unwanted trips to the bathroom during our sleep time.



Choose your vessel

If your vessel of choice is a Nalgene (good choice) then give yourself a time frame in which you should drink 3 of them daily for men or 2.5 for women. For example, with exception to your first initial 16 ounces after waking, drink a bottle with breakfast and finish by your mid-morning snack. Drink your second bottle between that mid-morning snack and the end of lunch. And finish your daily intake between lunch and dinner.

Tip #4 - Replace what you work off

During your daily work, training, or fire operations be cognizant of how much you sweat. Consider increasing your daily intake based on the amount of strenuous activity you are completing. Keep your vessel with you in the classroom, in the truck and on the training grounds. Be aware of your intake numbers as drinking too much water results in an upset stomach and can easily discourage your level of activity due to not feeling well or bloated. Consider electrolytes replacement when performing strenuous physical activity.



Keep your vessel with you

Tip #5 - Be consistent when on-duty and off-duty

Volunteer firefighters need to pay special consideration to their hydration as the unknown of when the alarm bell could ring. If you're consistent with your daily hydration you should be well hydrated if and when the bell rings. Career firefighters shouldn't be playing catch up when they come on shift. Hydration from the day before, should equate to starting out on the right foot when your shift begins.

Tip #6 - Chasers

Of course there are some men & women in the firehouse that really don't like plain water. Try different flavor additives but watch the sugar content. If you drink a cup of coffee, chase it with water afterward. If you enjoy a soda/pop then have some water afterward. If you have a sports drink, cut it with water. Most energy drinks and sports drinks are loaded in sugars and the body (unless significant physical conditioning is ongoing) will store that sugar. Cutting the sugar intake allows your body to metabolize it the first time and the water will aid in hydration. Consider all drinks other than from your daily intake vessel to be additions but not part of the daily intake equation.

Make hydration a priority so you can perform at your optimal level for the community you serve!

DON'T BURN UP YOUR LEATHER IN TRAINING FIRES!

BY MATT AMAN - LEATHERHEAD MAFIA

Many of us love wearing a Leather helmet. The tradition and comfort of these helmets are a couple of the reasons we are drawn to them. We paint them, bend them, sticker them up and show them off, it's just what us Leatherheads do. Our helmet is a part of our everyday equipment, and to prolong our Leather's life and maintain its integrity, we must consider that there is a time and a place when our Leather helmet needs to stay in our locker.

The Facts

The burn building is our ultimate training center and "playground". When the training calendar is released, we immediately look for our scheduled live burn dates. The burn building is where we practice newly researched tactics, try newly acquired tools and team build with our crew. We treat the burn building as the real thing, "we train like we fight." However, unlike a real fire, you should NOT be wearing your Leather in the burn building! Now, I know some of you are saying, "I always wear mine and its fine." That's great, but many of us Leatherheads have learned the hard way that this DOES cause damage to your lid. From personal experience and those shared by fellow firefighters, undo heat and stress from the burn building can cause your Leather to need a new paint job, require brim work to fix cracks or a warped brim and potentially cause you to decommission your Leather helmet completely. With these experiences in mind, it was time to share to prevent another brother or sister from wasting \$700 or more. Burn buildings are made to contain heat, and heat is not fantastic for your Leather for long periods of time. Would you drive your Viper in a snowstorm and have the road salt eat away at your paint? We didn't think so. Would it be fun to slide around in the snow in a Viper, yes it would, but we all can agree it would not be good for the longevity of your sports car. We

know you love your Leather and want to show it off to the guys, but it's not worth ruining your helmet for scheduled days at the burn building.



All photos by Author

Prevention

We suggest wearing a composite helmet during your burn building times. There are many great composites out there that we can wear for an hour or two and not have to worry about drying out or cracking. In fact, many of us can switch to a composite for this type of training using the free, issued helmet provided by our department. Whether you are looking for a shield to stand up to the burn building or our everyday tasks on the job, we also suggest outfitting whichever helmet you wear with a shield from Taylor's Tins. These lightweight shields stand up to heat and come in numerous styles. We always love to showcase a quality product, especially when it is also a firefighter owned and operated company to boot. If you are an Instructor and will be spending a decent amount of time in the burn room, we highly recommend getting yourself a composite lid with a Taylor's Tins shield. Having a composite helmet will save you a lot of money on repaints and brim work on your precious Leather. Don't worry about those salty Leatherheads who might give you a hard time for wearing Tactical Tupperware at the training grounds, its necessary in prolonging the life of your Leather.



Shop Taylor's Tins

Matt Aman is currently a career firefighter in Irondequoit NY. Matt spent time working in the department of defense fire service prior to returning to Irondequoit to be a full time career firefighter. Matt has been a member of the Leatherhead Mafia organization since 2018 and recently purchased the company at the beginning of 2020.



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DON'T BURN UP YOUR LEATHER IN TRAINING FIRES!

TRAIN LIKE AN ATHLETE

BY IAN PALMER - THIN LINE FITNESS

"Speed, endurance, strength, power, making split second decisions under extreme pressure, performing as part of a close-knit team, can perform any skill assigned but usually has a singular specialty." These may sound like traits of a professional athlete, but I'm describing firefighters, or, "tactical athletes."

As firefighters, we are expected to be at the "top of our game" from the day we start the academy, our version of training camp, until our retirement 20-30 years after. This is where we largely differentiate from professional athletes, with the average career across the major professional sports (NFL, MLB, NHL and NBA) lasting only 4.6 years.

Throughout our long careers, our bodies and minds go through some horrendous things, as we are expected to do much more as a tactical athlete than a sports athlete. From back injuries, ACL or MCL tears, concussions, rotator cuff injuries, along with a myriad of others. Those injuries seem to line up with common athlete injuries, don't they? Unlike professional athletes, though, we don't have multi-million dollar contracts and sponsorship deals to fall back on and retire early. We have a duty to our community. We have an internal drive and dedication that can't be paralleled by anyone else.

So, how do we stay at the top of our game throughout our entire career, while also minimizing injury? We train like the athletes we are. Professional athletes don't focus their strength and performance programs on being bodybuilders, and it's for a reason. Unlike bodybuilders, they are expected to use their bodies to perform extraordinary athletic feats, in very hot or very cold conditions, and usually for extended periods of time. Their bodies are trained for a purpose. Another big similarity, no?

Let's take a look at what exercises best correlate with those professional athletes perform:

Stretch and Warm-up

First and foremost, athletes stretch and warm-up well before each workout, and more so before each game. This is done with both **static** and **dynamic** stretching, and usually incorporates a cardio-focused warm-up. **Static stretching** is holding a stretch without movement. Think of the textbook hamstring stretch or quad stretch. There is a large list of static stretches. An important thing to remember while performing these stretches is the longer you hold them the better, as long as it is without pain.

Dynamic stretching is a sequence of movements to improve mobility and engage muscles through ranges of motion that mimic movements that are expected to be performed. Movements such as lunges, tail kickers, knee to chest, "power skip", the list goes on.

As firefighters, we should perform a list of agreed-upon stretches before each shift, as each shift is our "game" where we are expected to give those who pay our salary our absolute best. We've incorporated this method at my firehouse and it has been working well. It doesn't have to last long, even five minutes will make you more nimble and ready each shift and help prevent injury.



Deadlift

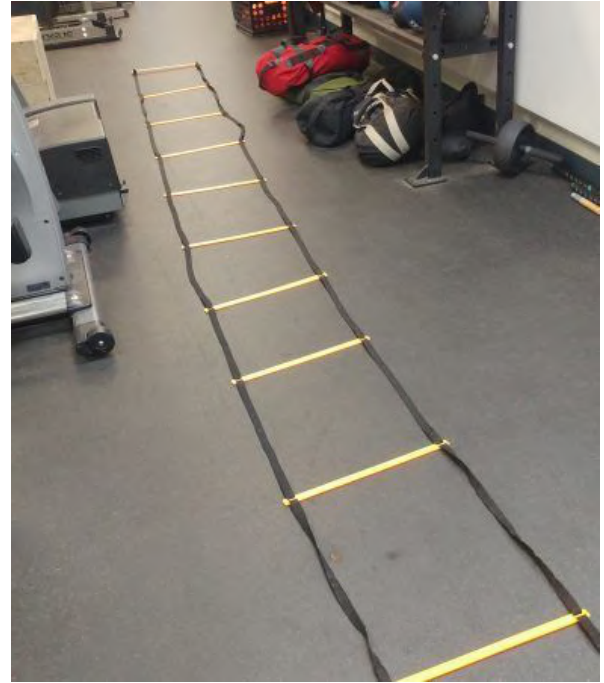
This is by far my favorite exercise. You can use it for strength and power, you can use it for endurance, or you can use it as a balance and coordination exercise if performing a single-leg Romanian Deadlift. The deadlift benefits the body in more ways than one thinks. It strengthens everything from your quads, hamstrings and glutes, to several back muscle groups, traps and levator scapulae (the muscle that connects your neck and shoulder). All areas that are commonly hurt by firefighters. To put it short, the deadlift is among the most beneficial exercises tactical athletes can perform.

Squat

Like the deadlift, squatting can be used as a strength and power movement or an endurance movement if used with low weight or body weight, and also works our core very well. It can also be coupled with other movements to make it more intense, such as a jump squat or a split squat. As firefighters, most of what we do involves our legs and core, from stretching and advancing a handline to climbing a ladder and forcible entry, everything gets easier with the stronger and more conditioned your legs and core are.

Footwork/Agility Drills

Think of the elite athletes in sports where footwork is a major trait of their abilities. Football, boxing, hockey. These athletes need to make sure they are never tripped up, or it could mean the other side may become victorious. A major cause of injuries among firefighters is tripping. One of the best ways to prevent this is by improving your footwork. There will always be the factors outside of our control, just like in sports when they get juked or outstepped by an opponent, but for the most part, these can be prevented with the addition of drills such as agility ladder drills (the options are numerous), the "dot drill", cone drills, jump rope, or doing something as simple as hopping in and out of a tire while changing feet and speed.



All photos by Author

Sprinting

Very few people enjoy running for miles. Long runs are still a great way to build your cardiorespiratory fitness, and by all means if this is how you train, continue. For those that don't enjoy long runs or may not have the time, sprinting is an amazing alternative. Not only do you get an amazing cardio workout, but you actually burn more calories during, and after, a sprint workout than you would if doing a sustained jog. This is known as **"EPOC" (Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption)**. Since sprints, and other exercises that include short rest periods, use more of a compound in the body called ATP (adenosine triphosphate), it requires more oxygen and work to replenish after the workout is finished, thus burning calories.

The sprint workouts don't have to last long. Each sprint should only last 10-20 seconds maximum depending on your ability. To make the sprints even more challenging, use one of my personal favorite tools, the sled. This will help increase your explosiveness and really give your legs a workout.

since sprints and all HIIT workouts are of high demand on your cardiorespiratory system, be sure of your abilities and consult a doctor if unsure



For advice on how to train yourself or your agency on functional fitness, contact Thin Line Fitness today.



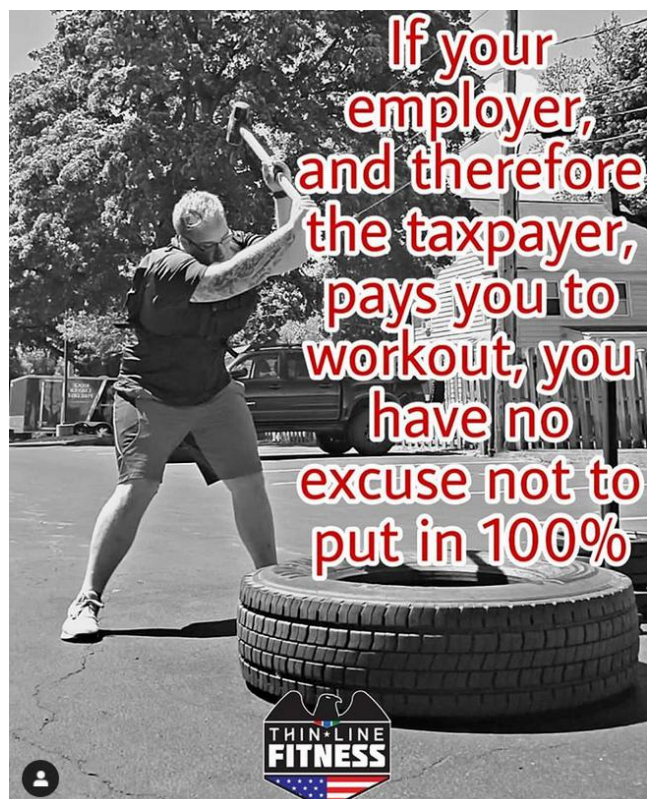
Nutrition

The final component of training like an athlete is usually the hardest to swallow (pun intended). We all look forward to the food on shift. Firefighters are not shy to boast their culinary skills, and with that can come some absolutely amazing dishes, be it breakfast, lunch or dinner. Unfortunately, many of these dishes can be loaded with way more carbs, fat and protein than our bodies need, or are capable of digesting properly. There could be an entire article about proper nutrition, but for this I will keep it simple. You function based on what you eat. Would you rather be an old deuce and a half that runs on used motor oil and "just gets the job done", or a McLaren that runs on premium and blows everyone away every time it's out? So, if you eat crap all the time you will feel sluggish and tired. If you eat good, healthy food in smart portions, you will operate at the top of your potential.

In short; eat good, feel good, be good.

In conclusion, firefighters aren't multi-million dollar sponsored athletes, we are tactical athletes with a purpose and responsibility in this world. With that responsibility, we need to train just as smart and intensely as our admired counterparts. Professional athletes don't stop training after they get drafted, why would we stop training after the academy? It's only hurting our team and our community. We need to train like this not only to make our jobs easier and to enjoy the well earned retirement, but because that is what the taxpayer expects of us every time they dial those three numbers.

Ian Palmer is a career fireman at the Ridge Culver Fire Department in Irondequoit, NY. He is a personal trainer, IAFF Peer Fitness Trainer, The lead fitness instructor at Montour Falls, and the owner of Thin Line Fitness. He has been a firefighter for a combined 12 years between volunteer and career, and strongly believes that good fitness is the foundation to build a good firefighter.





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TRUCK BAY DIY: HOSE BATTLE ROPES

BOX 585 FIRE TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE LLC PEER FITNESS TRAINERS

In the Issue 1 article, by our own Sarah Yale, titled *Battle Ropes: Injury Prevention and Functional Fitness*, she laid out the facts on why battles ropes should be in every firehouse. We made a cheap alternative to the traditional battle rope.

Battle Ropes can range from \$100 to \$250 depending on diameter, length, and whether or not it has a sheath protecting the rope. Sizes range from 1.5" to 2" in diameter. and lengths of 30 to 50 feet.

We made our very own Hose Battle Ropes out of surplus 1.75" attack hose and some Gorilla tape. There are alternatives online, some using 550 para cord and others using half inch PVC or dowels as handles, but we went extremely cost effective with just high quality gorilla tape for \$9 from the big box stores.

Make your own and check out Issue 1 for Sarah's recommended battle rope exercises.



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