



# Firefighter Rescue

## The Ultimate Fireground Challenge

By Captain Mike Gallagher

Firefighter rescue is one of the most challenging situations you'll ever face on the fireground



Firefighter rescue involves assisting and/or removing a firefighter from a troubled location or situation on the fireground.



# Also Including...

Guiding the firefighter to the outside (safety)

Extricating the firefighter from a collapse or entanglement

Securing his air supply with a new source

Sometimes the complexity is based on the situation and sometimes it's based on a lack of preparation



- Train like you work
- Work like you train

## FIREFIGHTER RESCUE CAN BE BROKEN DOWN INTO THREE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

1. Assisting or rescuing a member of your own crew
2. Assisting or rescuing a firefighter encountered during interior operations
3. Assisting or rescuing a firefighter when performing as part of a rapid intervention team.



Remain calm, communicate the situation, and use teamwork and previous training to resolve the problem.

# ASSISTING A MEMBER OF YOUR OWN CREW



A simple entanglement, a low air supply, a partial collapse...or any number of other things may occur which cause the member to require assistance.

A member of your crew may run into trouble and require assistance



No matter what the situation,  
immediate assistance and rescue of  
the firefighter comes from the crew  
members operating with the  
member

**ASSISTING A FIREFIGHTER  
ENCOUNTERED DURING INTERIOR  
OPERATIONS**

You may encounter another firefighter from another team in trouble. Communicate the problem to Command so that help (RIT) can be deployed. Firefighter rescue will take precedence over all other operations. Fireground functions (attack, search, etc.) must be continued or you're likely to become part of a larger problem.

Tunnel vision during this type of rescue  
may jeopardize all firefighters on the  
fireground

# ASSISTING A FIREFIGHTER AS PART OF A RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM

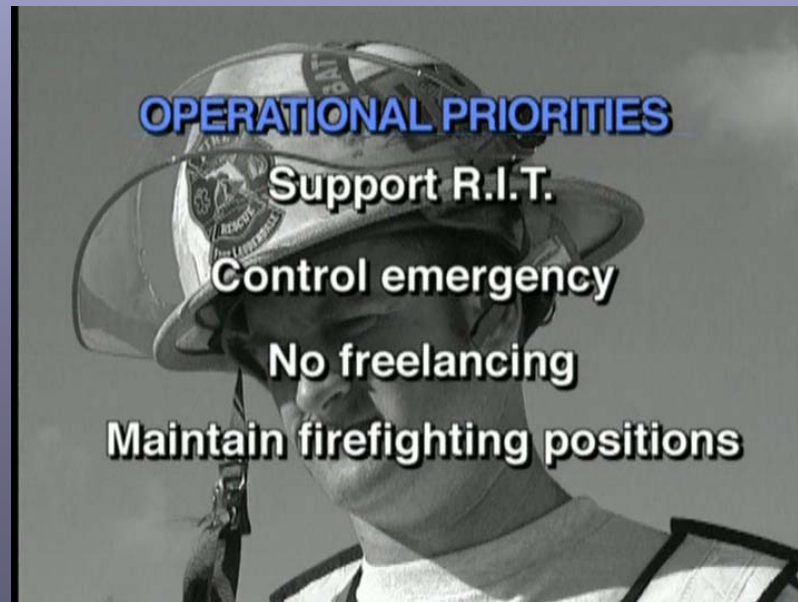


Firefighter rescue as part of a rapid intervention team, solid fireground skills, teamwork and, more than likely, additional rescue teams will be needed.



The rapid intervention team operates under the most intense fireground conditions-a firefighter in trouble with responsibilities to locate, stabilize/package, and remove the firefighter (or crew).

These stressful conditions (as with all firefighter rescue situations) require solid leadership and previous training if there is to be any chance of success.



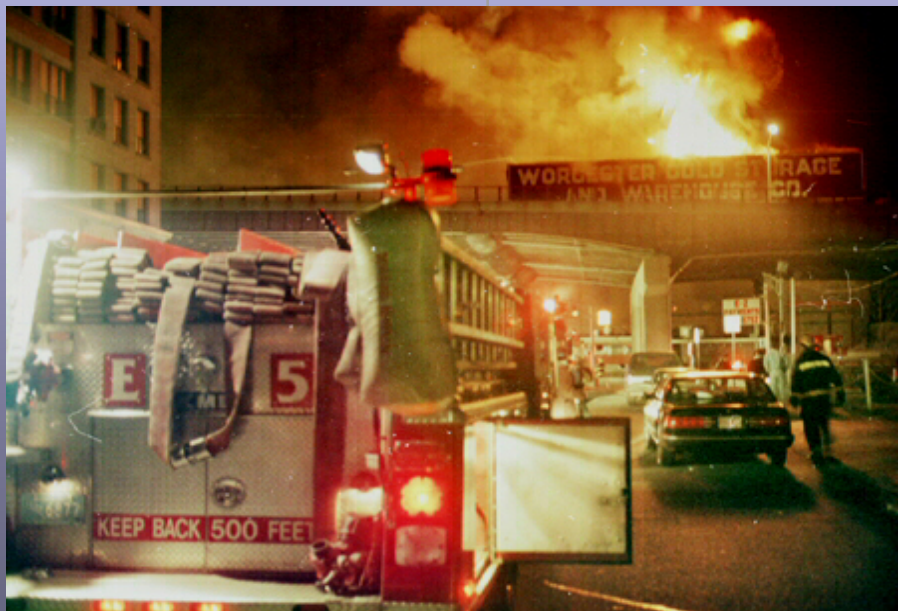
Where should it start ?



A known emergency-a firefighter in trouble-active fireground conditions and a time-sensitive rescue mission all combine to make a rapid intervention team operation one of the most difficult missions encountered on the fireground. Training, preparation, and a proactive attitude (by both firefighters and the department) are essential components of any successful firefighter rescue.

**WHEN WILL IT HAPPEN?**

New York...Worcester...Houston...Phoenix...St. Louis. There are many more cities and departments that could be listed. It's happened before and it will happen again.



Many firefighters feel that it will never happen to them but they couldn't be further from the truth. There are a number of variables that lead to an emergency, some can be controlled and some can't, and the individual firefighter is only one of them.

*Don't fall victim to complacency when it comes to planning for firefighter rescue.*



Anticipate trouble on every response and prepare for firefighter rescue before it's needed

**WHAT WILL A FIREFIGHTER  
RESCUE REQUIRE?**

A Firefighter rescue requires information, skilled firefighters and a lot of luck

That's right, luck! No matter how much information there is about the situation, no matter how skilled the firefighters performing the rescue are, things still have to go your way for success. Whatever you call it-luck, good fortune, catching a few breaks-if things don't fall into place then it still may not work out.

# *Information*



A successful firefighter rescue requires a constant flow of information. Where is the firefighter? What happened to cause the emergency? Can the firefighter help with the rescue? Can the firefighter help you in pinpointing his exact location?

All of these questions, and more, must be answered as soon as possible during the emergency. A continuous flow of information, and updates, must continue throughout the emergency.



## ***Skilled Firefighters***

Let's face it, when it's time to rescue one of your own you better know what you're doing! This will be the most stressful situation you've ever been a part of and it's not the time to figure out you're not ready for it.

A solid knowledge of basic firefighting skills- engine work, truck work, rescue work, building construction, fire behavior, size-up, communications, etc.-is essential if you're going to pull off a rescue. Being a part of a firefighter rescue team requires a personal commitment that you'll be up to the task and provide the best possible chance for a successful outcome. It's a bond between the rescuer(s) and the firefighter(s) being rescued.

# **SUCCESS VERSUS FAILURE**

Supporting a firefighter rescue and rapid intervention team program requires more than simply writing it down and providing a 'lip service' response. It requires a conscious effort on the part of all involved-along with frequent and realistic training-to be prepared for whatever might happen.



Being prepared means having a basic procedure in place, having a rapid intervention team on the fireground standing by and ready to perform, having all firefighters trained in individual survival and firefighter rescue skills, and, most of all, trying to prevent fireground emergencies by being proactive both before and during the fire.

**THERE ARE NO SECOND  
CHANCES!**



There are no second chances when it comes to rescuing a firefighter. A fireground emergency may happen at any time and a team must be standing by and capable of solving the emergency.



Being part of a rapid intervention team is not the most glorious assignment-a successful operation means you won't get 'a piece of the action'-but it's the most important assignment on the fireground when something goes wrong. There are absolutely no excuses, NONE, for not being 100% ready to rescue one of our own on the fireground!

Sometimes no matter how much preparation has been done, things still go wrong, but we all know the difference between a true tragedy and a failure to prepare. ***There are no second chances.***

**Remember, there's no-one coming in for  
us...**



**• But Us !!!**