

Snapshot Size-Up #118



Advancing Hose Lines

Being able to “*call the stretch*” should be the direct responsibility of the engine company officer, but prior to actually going to work, all (Engine Co.) firefighters have the responsibility of practicing hose line advancement. This includes more than simply choosing the correct size line. Firefighters should first assure the lines are properly loaded (packed). They should also be well practiced on the correct way to deploy and stretch a line so that it does not get caught up on obstructions such as parked cars, hallway banisters, staircases, etc.

One of the marks of an excellent Engine Company is efficient, effective hose stretches that are free from as many kinks as possible. Another is their ability to always assure they stretch enough line to get the nozzle where it needs to go. The only way to guarantee you stretch a long enough line to reach those distant or questionable areas of structures in your community is through training.

A quick and easy hose line advancement drill

You don't need to empty your hose bed every time you want to conduct a hose line advancement drill to see how much line you need to reach the basement or third floor of a structure. Instead, take a 200' length of rope and place a knot every 50'. Tie one end to the Engine (in the location you would place that apparatus in the event of a structure fire). Walk the rope into the building and see if you can reach the questionable areas. If not, take note of how much additional hose you would need in order to assure the hose line would be long enough to reach its destination. The time to make this determination is now ... not the day of the fire.



Deputy Chief Frank Viscuso is a twenty-year veteran of the fire service. He is a regular contributor to Fire Engineering Magazine & FireOpsOnline.com. He is also co-author of the book Fireground Operational Guides (PennWell 2011). The book features universal tactical worksheets and operational guides for more than 70 incidents that range from water, gas and electrical emergencies to multiple-alarm structure fires.