

FireOpsOnline.com

Your Online Resource for Free Fire Training, Drills and Tips

Snapshot Size-Up #136

Roof Radio Reports

It is without doubt that we should attempt to conduct a multi-sided, preferably '360-degree' view of the fire building upon our arrival. But in many situations, this is not possible. The most obvious is when you're confronted with a significant number of attached buildings making it literally impossible to actually view the rear of these buildings. In situations as described, the quickest way to get a look at the rear is from above.



Walking the Rim: Ladder Company members assigned to the roof have a clear and early advantage to recon the rear of the building. Members assigned to this position can identify a much different picture than what is viewed and assumed from the Command Post side. Simply, "if it looks bad in the front, it could be much worse in the rear".

For a quick assessment of the rear, consider the following: As members go to work on the roof performing their assigned duties, assign one member to walk the "rim" or perimeter of the roof looking over the side for a number of concerns that can be reported to the Incident Commander.

Roof Radio Report 'Tips':

- Fire/smoke showing other than the command side – be specific. "Fire showing from 3 windows on the 3rd floor/rear".
- Fire/smoke showing in a shared light/air shaft – be specific again. Stating its heavy in the shaft is not good enough. Is it heavy smoke, fire? "Fire showing in the shaft on the "B" side is better."
- Occupant life hazard – this is why it is important to actually walk the rim and look over the side. Be observant to people hanging out rear windows or civilians who may have actually jumped and are laying in the rear yard. Again be specific. "We have a woman hanging out the 4th floor window in the rear". This will also help identify which size ladder we need to get to the rear.
- Fire extension in the rear – Fire exiting out windows and spreading to neighboring exposures via the combustible exterior sheathing, as well as fire extending to the rear of the attached exposure buildings via the same means needs to be known.
- Surrounding exposure concerns – What we mean by this reference are the exposure buildings from the adjacent street. In Jersey City we often experience rows of buildings sharing small yards that can easily allow fire to spread from the rear of one building across the yard to the rear of another building on the opposite street.
- Accessibility – Buildings may have limited to almost non-existent accessibility to the rear. Roof members can advise of the easiest and quickest way to access the rear of the fire building. This can be through rear yards of buildings on the parallel street, alleys or narrow driveways, rear yards at the end of the block, or even going through the buildings, or up and over them. Don't be deterred. Regardless of the accessibility options, resources must get to the rear.
- Regarding radio usage, think about what you're going to say before you say it. If it's NOT useful, stay off the radio.

Photo by Ron Jeffers

Deputy Chief Mike Terpak (Jersey City Fire Department) is the founder of Promotional Prep, a NJ based consulting firm designed to prepare firefighters and officers as they study for promotional exams. He is also the author of *Fireground Size-Up*, & *Assessment Center Strategy and Tactics*, and co-author of *Fireground Operational Guides*. Visit www.FireOpsOnline.com for more articles and tips from Chief Terpak.

