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## Snapshot Size-Up #138

### Roof Ops – Return Walls

Within every flat or peaked roof deck that contains a skylight or scuttle opening, you will find the “Return Walls” (See brown section in photo).

Return Walls are the four walls that outline the opening from the top of the roof deck down to the top floor ceiling. Behind this boxed opening will be the cockloft or attic space of the building(s).



The Return Wall height (if not obscured by smoke/fire) will indicate the actual height of the concealed space. In many older installations the Return Walls can be constructed of 1x12 inch pine or wainscoting panels, to in more modern installations, ½ inch sheetrock.

Accessing the cockloft or attic space via the Return Walls is arguably the most over looked opportunity when operating on the roof of a fire building and/or attached exposure.

Next time you are operating on the roof and need to vent the buildings top floor and cockloft, or want to determine any involvement of the space within the attached row, remove the return walls. A few pokes and pulls from a 6 foot hook will quickly give you access to the space, as well eliminate damage from unnecessary inspection holes throughout the roof deck.

For more text information on Row Frames, Multiple Dwellings, Taxpayers and Strip Mall fires go to Chapters 3, 4 & 6 of Fire Ground Size-Up as well as Chapter 2 of Fire Ground Operational Guides.

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](http://www.FireOpsOnline.com) for more articles and tips from Chief Terpak.

