Appendix C

Structural Triage and Preparation

Size-up Considerations

- What is the current and expected weather?
- Are fuels heavy, moderate, or light? What is the arrangement and continuity of fuels?
- Is there any hazardous topography?
- What have fires in this area done before?
- What is the fire’s current and expected behavior?
  - What is the rate and direction of spread?
  - What is the potential for spotting and firebrands?
  - Will topographical features or expected weather changes affect the rate of spread?
- What are the number and density of structures threatened?
- What are the available resources?
- Will you have to evacuate people or animals?
  - Are there residents that will resist or oppose evacuation?
- How hazardous is the structure?
  - What is the roofing material?
  - Are the gutters full of litter?
  - Are there open eaves and unscreened vents?
  - Does the structure have wooden decking?
  - Is there defensible space?
  - Are there large windows with flammable drapes or curtains?
  - What is the size and location of propane tanks and/or fuel storage tanks?

Fire Fighter Safety

- What are the routes of egress and ingress?
  - What is the largest engine that can access the structure safely?
  - Are the roads two-way or one-way?
  - Are there road grades steeper than 10%?
  - Are the road surfaces all weather?
  - Are there load-limited bridges?
• Are there anchor points for line construction?
• Are there adequate safety zones?
• What are the escape routes?
• Are there special hazards such as hazardous materials, explosives, high-voltage lines, or above ground fuel tanks?
• Are communications adequate?

Structure Triage Categories

Structures should be sorted into one of three categories:

1. Stand-Alone or Not Threatened
2. Defensible
3. Not Defensible

Factors that may make an attempt to save a structure too dangerous or hopeless:

• The fire is making sustained runs in live fuels, and there is little or no defensible space.
• Spot fires are too numerous to control with existing resources.
• Water supply will be exhausted before the threat has passed.
• The roof is more than 1/3 involved in flames.
• There is fire inside the structure.
• Rapid egress from the area is dangerous or may be delayed.
**Common Ignition Points**

- Flammable roof coverings and debris.
- Unscreened vents, windows, or holes.
- Open doors, windows or crawl spaces.
- Wooden decks, lawn furniture, stacked wood, or trash piles.
- Openings under porches or patio covers.

**REMEMBER:** In windy conditions, firebrands can enter almost any opening.

---