

Operating Guideline # 602

Water Supply Rural Operations (NON-HYDRANT)

October 9, 2019



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines to maximize fire flows at rural fire incidents.

GUIDELINE:

1. The officer in charge of the first responding pumper to a structure fire in a rural (non-hydrant) area shall make an assessment of the need to establish a water supply based on information that is available from dispatch (i.e. – working structure fire reported, persons confirmed trapped, type of structure involved), situational issues (i.e. – time of day, anticipated response of additional personnel and units) as well as observations made while en route (i.e. - smoke column visible). The decision to initiate a fast attack with the on-board water supply vs. the need to establish a sustained water supply can only be made based on a thorough assessment of situational elements as they are known at the time.
2. A minimum of two pumpers and three fire department tankers will be part of the initial response to a reported structure fire in a rural area. Where one or more of the Muskoka Lakes tankers is unavailable, the initial responding officer should make a request for Mutual-Aid from the closest adjoining jurisdiction to supplement the response for the Muskoka Lakes tanker(s) that is unavailable.
3. Based on the extent of fire suppression operations and fire volume/potential, the Incident Commander may request additional tankers (Mutual-Aid) from adjoining jurisdictions such that water supply availability meets the expected demands of the incident.

“Nurse” Operations

4. Where water supply demands for fire suppression operations are minimal or moderate, and they do not meet the fire flow needs for extensive operations, the Incident Commander may consider “nursing” operations. In this case, tankers (usually one at a time) supply the first-in pumpers by way of “tank to pump” operations via 65mm or 100mm supply lines.

Tanker Shuttle Operations

5. Where water supply demands are more intense, a tanker shuttle operation may be indicated. In this circumstance, one or more “port-a-tanks” should be set up in an appropriate location that will facilitate direct drafting operations by the first-in pump. Consideration must be given to ensure that the fill site is large enough to accommodate one or more port-a-tanks as well as for the movement of personnel and tankers or other apparatus in and out of the fill site area.

6. As an alternate to having the first-in pumper conduct drafting operations, it may be more efficient for a second-in pumper to conduct drafting operations and pump to the first-in pump (i.e. – a long narrow private road/laneway).

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7. On rare occasions, it may be possible to position the first-in pumper at a sizable static water source such as a pond or lake and draft directly for water supply purposes. EVO's must be cautious to ensure that the surface is suitable for operations.

8. The use of portable pumps to draw water from a static water source is a viable alternative to filling tankers from a hydrant - or for supplying water to a pumping apparatus in some cases – however the Incident Commander or Water Sector Officer must conduct a risk assessment prior to any related activities occurring. Where there is a risk that firefighters could fall into the water, a PFD shall be worn by any firefighter who finds themselves working near the water (SEE ALSO GFD OG 103 –Working Near Water). This is especially true in winter as “no ice is considered safe ice”.

9. Keep hands clear of any hose folds or kinks before, during and after charging the hose to avoid “pinching” type injuries.

10. Always wear fire department issued or approved gloves when handling hose lines.

11. Once charged, hose lines of all sizes can be dangerous and difficult to handle. Ensure sufficient staffing is available to move/advance or otherwise maneuver hose lines. Use proper lifting techniques (lift with the legs keeping your back straight) to avoid injuries.

12. Tighten any leaking couplings – this is especially important in winter to avoid water pooling and ice build-up to prevent slips, trips and falls.

13. Never attempt to disconnect hose when the hose line is “charged” with water under pressure.

14. Use caution when stepping over hose lines to avoid tripping; avoid walking on charged hose lines.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all Emergency Operations Division staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

REFERENCES:

- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note GN-6-25 – Safety Considerations for Fire Department Tankers
- MLFD OG 507 – Off Road Operation of Apparatus
- MLFD OG 103 – Working Near Water