

Operating Guideline # 709

Operational Modes

December 9, 2019



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to outline the three “Operational Modes” that are available to the Incident Commander specifically for structural fire situations.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

The declaration of an operational mode by an Incident Commander allows other responding crews to prepare themselves as each requires a different set of fire ground actions.

GUIDELINE:

1. When arriving at the scene of a structure fire, the Incident Commander (IC) must conduct a thorough risk vs. benefit evaluation that will dictate whether crews are sent to conduct interior operations, placing them at risk, or whether a more cautious approach is warranted.
2. The IC should communicate clearly that operations will be conducted in an “offensive” mode, “defensive” mode, or “marginal” mode initially, bearing in mind that it is possible to transition from one mode to another as the incident and operations progress.
3. An “offensive” mode declaration indicates that aggressive interior operations are warranted based on observed/known conditions and the risk management philosophy (SEE MLFD OG 221 – Risk Management Philosophy) and that the resources that are at the scene or responding to the incident are adequate to address immediate safety concerns.
4. A “defensive” mode declaration indicates that fire ground conditions or the resourcing that is immediately available dictate that the risks are too great to justify an interior based fire attack, and that operations will be limited to exterior ones focusing on exposure protection.
5. A “marginal” mode declaration indicates that a serious fire is occurring and growing in intensity, but that a reasonable effort should be made to conduct a rapid interior fire attack in an effort to gain quick control of the situation.
6. If at any point in operations, the IC decides to transition to another operational mode, he/she must clearly communicate this via radio to all units operating at the fire.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all members to comply with the provisions of this OG and particularly that Company Officers (supervisors) and firefighters (workers) ensure that they adhere to their duties in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

REFERENCES:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (RSO 1990, c. 0.1)
- MLFD OG 701 - Role and Responsibilities of the Incident Commander
- MLFD OG 221 - Risk Management Philosophy
- “Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer, Fifth Edition”, IFSTA