

Operating Guideline # 809

Chimney Fire Response

January 22, 2022



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines for the response to residential chimney fires.

GUIDELINE:

1. The response to the report of a chimney fire should be approached as a full structure fire until such time as the Incident Commander determines that the fire is contained to the chimney and there is no threat of fire extension into concealed spaces such as walls, floors and attic spaces. Beyond the initially responding apparatus, additional pumpers and/or tankers and other support units should routinely respond as part of the initial response.
2. Upon arrival at the incident, the I/C should cause an initial investigation to be made to determine if the fire is still active and whether or not the fire has extended beyond the confines of the chimney itself.
3. Roof operations should be avoided whenever possible, however if required and safe to do so (always check structural integrity initially and throughout operations), a minimum of two personnel wearing full PPE and equipped with a radio will be utilized. The firefighter directly involved with the inspection of the chimney shall wear SCBA and be “on air” when the inspection is made. Due to the potential for reduced visibility and the loss of footing/balance, the second firefighter will monitor and assist the first firefighter. Unless unusual circumstances are encountered no more than three personnel should be on the roof at one time including a sector officer equipped with radio communications. Roof ladders should be utilized when appropriate to distribute the weight of crews working on a pitched roof.
4. Crews working at the appliance shall attempt to determine the extent of the fire in the chimney and minimize the heat being directed to the roof crew through careful extinguishment and removal of the material burning in the fire box.
5. Interior crews shall use salvage covers and/or runners to keep floor coverings clean.
6. A thorough check of all areas where the chimney penetrates structural elements shall be made using visual means and thermal imagers prior to crews leaving the scene.
7. Where a fire is still burning inside a chimney, attempts to extinguish the fire should be made with a dry chemical extinguisher or through the use of steam directed up the chimney from the fire box area. In some cases (i.e. - well-built masonry chimneys), it may be helpful to simply let the fire burn itself out. The use of chains or similar tools to clear a blockage in the chimney may be used.

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8. At the conclusion of operations, the occupant is to be ordered by an Assistant to the Fire Marshal (District Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Chief or FPO) that the chimney is regarded as unsafe to use until it has been inspected by a W.E.T.T. certified technician and confirmed compliant with W.E.T.T. The verbal order is below...

“According to Ontario Regulation 213/07 Division B Part 2 Subsection 2.6.1.4, Every chimney, flue and flue pipe shall be inspected to identify any dangerous condition at intervals not greater than 12 months, at the time of addition of any appliance and after any chimney fire. Further, according to Subsection 2.1.1.3. (2) the above subsection does apply to individual dwelling units, therefore I am ordering you to have this chimney/flue/wood stove W.E.T.T. inspected and this chimney/flue/wood stove is not to be used until such time that this inspection is complete and confirms that this chimney/flue/wood stove is safe to operate.”

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 provisions of this document and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

REFERENCES:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (RSO 1990, c. 0.1)
- Ontario Regulation 213/07