Skills School:

Pride & Ownership for Firefighter Survival.

Prep Training

By: Lt Roger Brennan, Ellicott Creek Fire Department

A few years ago the NYS Office of Fire Prevention introduced a new format for the NYS Firefighter 1 Interior Fire fighter course. The concept was to introduce a task oriented air consumption test that students would have to pass. Failure to complete this test simply meant you transferred over to the Exterior Operations class. The year that the air consumption test was put into effect, I was in my second year as a Lieutenant. I had just introduced a new probationary program for the first year requirements of our new firefighters. When we learned of the changes, Captain Eric Frase and I were assigned to the probationary training program and realized we needed to get to work fast to prepare five of our firefighters for the class that was just over a month away.

The county had prepared and published a detailed video and description of the course, and I studied and came up with what I considered a very close and realistic simulation. We set it up in our truck bay and had our students watch the video and we explained what was expected. I was not sure how close I really was to the actual course, however. Only time would tell and we really did not have a lot of time on our side. I think we really only were able to run them through it 3 times, (one night a week for the 3 weeks before the test date.) I hoped it was enough. The night came and went and we had three firefighters complete it. I was beside myself. I felt I had let down the two other students and our department. I felt I had not done enough to prepare them and I swore that would not happen again. In the end I talked at length with the student who made it through and asked how close my course was. He told me it was spot on, about as close as you can get without being on the actual course at the tower.

Fast forward one year. Early in 2015, three probationary members were enrolled in the class. One of them was one of the students who did not make it through the prior year. We again set up the course, but we started out about 8 weeks prior. We decided to not only make them do the task oriented course but introduce other tasks that we knew they would need to perform in class. Hose line advancement, search and rescue, fire fighter self-rescue, just to name a few. The goal was to set the bar and their conditioning a bit higher, to work them harder, than what the air consumption test would require. This time all three had passed the test and continued on. At the graduation ceremony, the lead instructor complimented my firefighters on how mature and confident they were in class. He commented, about the one firefighter who did not make it the year before, in how well his skills and work ethic had matured.

In 2016, our department had quite an influx of both transfer and new fire fighters. At one point we had around 18 firefighters on probation, about a dozen would be going into the August class. We also were the host company so I felt we needed to have a good strong performance in the class. This would be the last time the Exterior and Interior class would be merged. After that it would become two separate classes. The state also introduced the “Home Department Skills Sheets” in late 2015. These were 16 skills that required us to teach and sign off on before that unit topic was covered in class. Needless to say we had a lot of ground to cover. In the end we ended up with nine in the class. I sat them down and explained what we needed to do. I asked them to pick a day of the week outside of drill nights for us to work solely on the task of prepping them to succeed. I explained that if they gave me their best effort and pushed themselves, there was nothing in class they would not be ready for. We spent 10 weeks every Wednesday night not only training but having some fun and meeting our goals for the session. They never complained…much.

Five days before the task oriented air consumption test the instructors did a bottle bleed so the students could gauge how long they could work on a cylinder. The instructors told me they could tell my firefighters had prepared by how easily they performed. The night of the test, I had to leave before all the crews had completed the course. Before I left, I overheard the last half of the group talking about how long and how many circuits the ones before had done. They set a challenge to complete more circuits and last longer on air than the guys before… and they did!

Now you know the back story. Since that class many of those students have stepped up as each new fire fighter prepares for their shot at BEFO/IFO (Basic Exterior Firefighter Operations/Interior Firefighter Operations). As far as we are concerned, all our firefighters will go on to become Interior Qualified, unless they make a personal choice not to, but we encourage and train them as if they will.

The following is an overview and break down of the program that I developed to meet and exceed the expectations and requirements of the NYS OFP BEFO/IFO course. Hope it is something you are already doing with your new firefighters or if not, now you have it. No excuses, get them ready. “Make them take pride in preparing for class, make them take ownership of their skills, it may just be what they need to survive!!!”

***BEFO/IFO Skills & Preparation***

***Training Program***

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the following program is to guide the officers and/or senior members responsible for the preparation and training of the probationary firefighters prior to the start of the *New Your State BEFO/IFO Firefighter 1* *Course.*

**Objectives:**

(1) Prepare probationary firefighters for 100% proficiency in the sixteen (16) required skills evaluation sheets requiring home department training officer(s) signature.

(2) Prepare probationary members for 100% proficiency in the eight (8) skills required in the *NYS FF1 Task Oriented Air Consumption Evaluation,* prior to entering the IFO Course.

(3) Provide opportunity for the ECVFD Officers to evaluate probationary members progress toward 100% proficiency of the skills and requirements needed to complete the *ECVFD Probationary Check-off Program.*

***Program Concepts:***

This training program is designed to familiarize and prepare probationary firefighters with the skills, tasks, and operations needed by all firefighters. Its purpose is to expose skills and concepts to the new firefighter that will be expanded upon in the NYS Courses. This program is in no way intended to be a replacement or standard for any firefighter’s status.

***Recommendations:***

It is recommended to start this program four (4) weeks prior to the start of the BEFO Class and continue concurrently with the first four (4) weeks of the BEFO course. This schedule will allow for completion of the sixteen (16) home department skills sheets and provide “on air” time and familiarization with the SCBA. It provides confidence training for the “Task Oriented Air Consumption” evaluation prior to the start of IFO Class.

This program is adaptable and flexible to provide longer training times and repetitive cycles for practice and proficiency of skills.

\*\****Note:*** *Time allotments are estimations of the time needed to cover specified topics. Time allotment can and should be altered based on student needs.*

Week # 1 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet #

A.) SCBA/PPE Familiarization

1.) 2 Minute Drill 20 Mins.

2.) Clean/Inspect/Sanitize SCBA 10 Mins. 6-I-6 & 7

3.) SCBA Bottle Change 1 & 2 FF 10 Mins.

4.) Bottle Bleed Down 45 Mins.

5.) Filling SCBA Cylinders 5 Mins. 6-I-8 & 9

B.) Operations

1.) FEMA ICS 100- Student ID Setup 30 Mins.

2.) Responding on Apparatus 10 Mins 2-I-1

3.) Establishing & Operating in

Work Zones 10 Mins. 2-I-2

4.) Emergency Scene Illumination 10 Mins. 10-I-1

C.) Preparatory

1.) Task Oriented Air

Consumption Video 10 Mins.

2.) Cleaning/Inspecting Rope 5 Mins. 8-I-1

3.) Hand/Power Tool Maintenance 10 Mins. 11-I-1 & 2

4.) Search/Rescue Techniques 5 Mins.

Week # 2 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet #

A.) SCBA/PPE Familiarization

1.) 2 Minute Drill 20 Mins.

2.) Task Oriented Air Consumption 45 Mins.

B.) Operations

1.) Basic Hose/ Rolling Hose 20 Mins 15-I-1,2,3,4

2.) Rolling, Cleaning, Inspecting

Salvage Covers

& Salvage Cover Deployment-

1&2 FF Methods 15 Mins. 18-I-2,3,6,7

3.) Water Supply 45 Mins.

Week # 2 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet #

C.) Preparatory

1.) FEMA ICS 100- Review 5 Mins.

2.) FEMA ICS 700 30 Mins.

Week # 3 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet # A.) SCBA/PPE Familiarization

1.) 2 Minute Drill 10 Mins.

2.) Wall Breaches 20 Mins.

3.) Mask Confidence 30 Mins.

B.)Operations

1.) Water Supply Review 10 Mins.

2.) Hose Loads & Advances

a.) Load/Advance

-Triple Layered Load 10 Mins. 15-I-6

-Minute Man Load 10 Mins. 15-I-10

-Accordion Load 10 Mins. 15-I-11, 14

3.) Ground Ladders

a.) Clean, Inspect, Maintaining 16 Mins. 12-I-1

b.) Ladder Carries 15 Mins.

c.) Ladder Deployment 15 Mins.

C.) Preparatory

1.) Skills & ICS Review 20 Mins.

2.) Knots 20 Mins.

Week # 4 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet #

A.)SCBA/PPE Familiarization

1.) 2 Minute Drill 10 Mins.

2.) Task Oriented

Air Consumption #2 60 Mins.

B.) Operations

1.) Water Supply &

Advancing Hand lines 60 Mins.

C.) Preparatory

1.) Skills & Knots Review 50 Mins

2.) Practice Exam

Week # 5 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet #

A.) SCBA/PPE Familiarization

1.) 3 Minute Drill 4 Mins.

2.) Task Oriented

Air Consumption #3 45 Mins.

B.) Operations

1.) Water Supply &

Advancing Hand lines 30 Mins.

2.) Victim & F.F. Rescue 30 Mins.

3.) F.F. Self-Rescue 30 Mins.

C.) Preparatory

1.) Skills & Knots Review 20 Mins.

2.) Practice Exam Questions 20 Mins.

Week # 6 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet #

A.) SCBA/PPE Familiarization

1.) 3 Minute Drill 4 Mins.

2.) F.F. Challenge (on Air) 60 Mins.

B.) Operations

1.) Water Supply 30 Mins.

C.) Preparatory

1.) Skills Review 30 Mins.

Week # 7 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet #

A.) SCBA/PPE Familiarization

1.) 3 Minute Drill 3 Mins.

B.) Operations

1.) Advancing Hose Lines (Water ball) 90 Mins.

2.) Drill Team Drills 60 Mins.

C.) Preparatory

1.) Review Questions & Skills Review 30 Mins

Week # 8 Topics Covered Time Allotment Skill Sheet #

A.) SCBA/PPE Familiarization

1.) 3 Minute Drill 3 Mins.

B.) Operations

1.) Fire Fighter Challenge

Course #2 60 Mins.

C.) Preparatory

1.) Overall Review of all training 60 Mins.