

# BOX 585

A MAGAZINE FOR 585  
FIREFIGHTERS



2021 - ISSUE 1



## CONTENTS

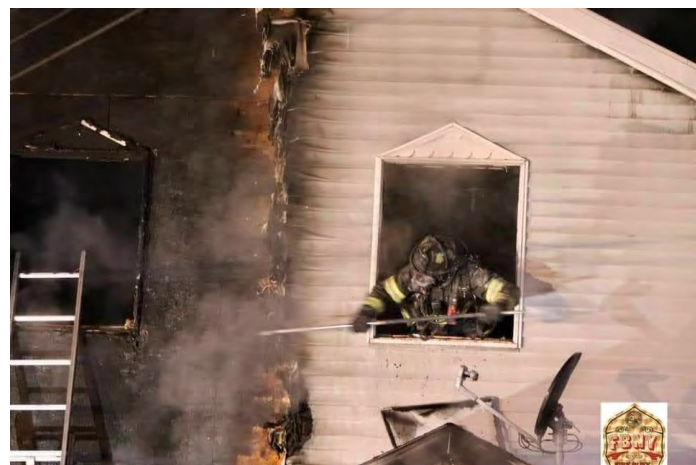
- 05**      **Outside the Box Thinking for Residential Primary Search**  
Louis A. Comenale III  
Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC
- 09**      **Leadership and Your Actions**  
Stefano "Steve" Napolitano  
City of Batavia Fire Department
- 12**      **The Worst Case Scenario**  
**Part 2: Air & Drags**  
Chuck Hammon  
Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC
- 17**      **Are you Prepared for Extrication?**  
**Part I - The Prepared Incident Commander**  
Todd Bane  
Bushnell's Basin Fire Department
- 19**      **Be the Worst Firefighter in the Room**  
Andy Young  
Vigilant Fire Service Training, LLC
- 22**      **Jack of All Trades**  
Ian Palmer  
Thin Line Fitness, LLC
- 25**      **Truck Bay DIY: Hose Stretch Bottle**  
Chuck Hammon  
Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC

## THE FRONT COVER



*Photo by Jeff Arnold*

## THE BACK COVER



*Photo by FBNY*

# BOX 585 FIRE TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE LLC

Welcome new readers and welcome back to those who enjoyed Issues 1 & 2! We are pleased to bring you the beginning of our 2021 editions. As a new training company, we are beginning to expand our network, our capabilities, and look forward to bringing continuous content to you. As we post events in the area, classes, and all things Box 585, please subscribe to our website and check us out on social media. Other local training companies are posted as well.

We continue our mission of being a resource to all 585 fire departments, so if you have an idea or you want to share, please contact us anytime.

Enjoy!

Chuck Hammon  
Founder of Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC  
[www.box585fire.com](http://www.box585fire.com)



## Lyons Emergency Equipment & Rescue Solutions



### BUS RESCUE CLASS



**LOCATION LYONS COLLISION**  
**511 ORIENT ST**  
**MEDINA NY 14103**

**APRIL 10 2021**

**8AM-5PM**

*Limited space class max 25 students*

**Signup [Kr.rescuesolutions@gmail.com](mailto:Kr.rescuesolutions@gmail.com)**

**607-793-8212**

**\$175 PER STUDENT**

**All checks payable to  
Lyons Emergency Equipment**

**All checks must be received by  
Class minimum 15 students**

**April 1 2021**



WELCOME





# FLASH POINT CUSTOMS

## Custom Laser Engraving

CUSTOMS

Local firefighter owned and operated!



## For all your firehouse customizing needs

- Custom drinkware
- Accountability tags
- Locker/name tags

- Plaques and awards
- 2% and Crew gifts
- Fundraisers

[www.flashpointcustoms.com](http://www.flashpointcustoms.com)



@flash\_point\_custom



# OUTSIDE THE BOX THINKING FOR RESIDENTIAL SEARCH

LOUIS A. COMENALE III

The past couple of months there have been discussions regarding primary searches at residential structure fires. Gaining access and searching with or without tools are two main points to be discussed. This is not intended to change operating procedures, more to promote thinking firefighters.

Tactically, search is the act of looking for fire and victims. Searching for fire is traditionally done by Truck Companies but in the majority of staffing levels searching for fire coincides with hose-line advancement, a seasoned engine officer should move ahead of the line directing the nozzleman to where the fire is located (topic for another day). Once hose-lines are deployed and heading towards the fire to confine and extinguish it, another company will need to be assigned to a primary search for victims and fire extension.

Routinely firefighters gain access to structures via the front door. If and when a company officer conducts a 360-degree size up, a better way to enter the structure might be found. Even so, once a door is used for hose-line deployment it becomes a bottleneck. Everyone trying to gain access to the structure focuses on that one door. This bottleneck can delay rescue crews from entering the structure, time is being wasted. The major factor for the survivability of victims is time.



Photo by Matt Pillsbury



Photo by Matt Pillsbury

How do we "make-up" time for our victims? We all know there are precautions civilians can do in their homes to give them the best chance of survival if they ever experience a fire in their home, working smoke detectors and closing bedroom doors while sleeping are two major ones.

But what can we as the fire department do? Turning out quickly, which has been addressed, hustling on the fire ground, yes the dreaded 'R' word running, being able to mask up with gloves on quickly are a few... think about the time from the front door to the second floor of a two-story residential house. Trying to make your way over hose and the engine company can be cumbersome and once inside depending on visibility it might take time to find the stairs. This task can become even more difficult if the structure has been renovated or worse illegally turned into Single Room Occupancies "SRO's" the stairs could either be hidden or locked. Depending on the type of residential structure there might be a second staircase; this second staircase can expedite the search to divisions 2, 3, etc. Preplans and building construction knowledge are paramount in finding the staircases.

The fire service usually thinks of ladders for two reasons, rescue, and emergency egress, why not use them for access as well. Arriving on-scene to a residential structure that is larger than a ranch style (one division), assigned to search the upper divisions, utilizing a ladder to gain access to upper divisions could expedite your search. There is no guesswork to the upper divisions, once you ladder that division and gain access through a window you are in that division. Structures, where more than one window/room can be accessed from a roof, is even better, the deployment of a single ladder gives access and egress to multiple windows and rooms.

Even better, if the ladder can give access to the roof while being deployed to an even higher division, we have a ladder being used for not only multiple rooms but also multiple divisions. For example, an extension ladder can be deployed to Division 3 window of a 2 1/2 Story Dutch Colonial (2 1/2 indicates a 3 story structure but the 3rd story does not have full height walls or has knee walls), if there is an overhanging roof i.e. porch roof, the beams should rest on the porch roof while being extended to the division 3 window, thus giving access to both division 2 and division 3. (See Picture 1).



*Photo by Author*

Using secondary staircases or ladders to start a primary search for upper divisions is not a new tactic, it just is one that seems to not be utilized much. Speaking to some smart seasoned Truck Companies and Rescue Companies this is their internal company operating procedure. It does not deviate from

department general orders or operating guidelines, their company just sets the expectation for their members when assigned to upper divisions that they will aggressively gain access by all means.

Once inside the structure and the search for victims and fire has begun we have been drilled into our heads since the academy is to always have a tool in your hand. According to the United States Fire Administration over fifty percent of all fire fatalities occur in bedrooms, if we are searching bedrooms in residential structures, one to two and a half story homes, what are we using a tool for? The average standard bedroom for homes under 2,500 square feet in the United States is roughly 132 square feet (11 Ft. X12 Ft.), 224 square feet (14 Ft. x 16 Ft.) respectively for master bedrooms. If your argument is you need a tool to reach I would say you are better off searching with your hands and feet (See Picture 2).



*Photo by Author*

If the average bedroom is 11 - 12 feet wide a firefighter stretched out can cover the entire bedroom without a tool. In reality, with the addition of furniture in bedrooms, the square footage diminishes. I would also argue that firefighters are more proficient and efficient in searching without a tool in their hands.

This is not to say to not bring a tool with you in the structure but when entering a room leave the tool at the door, the tool now acts as a landmark to your door and if you need it it is easily accessible. After observing firefighters search with tools and missing victims (rescue manikins), including myself, we have drilled on searching without a tool, leaving it at the door.



What we noticed was that firefighters are more concerned about making sure the tool is not lost while searching rather than completing a proficient search and searching without a tool has lead to greater success in finding victims. I will argue for tools while searching for one reason, safety. Searching above a fire is one of the most dangerous jobs on the fire ground. Searching directly above the fire room is even more dangerous. In high heat, zero visibility conditions, close to the main body of fire, firefighters need to have a tool in their hand. Searching in zero visibility and high heat conditions the tool should be the sounding device. Utilizing the tool out in front to check the integrity of the floor is a great practice.



*Photo by Author*

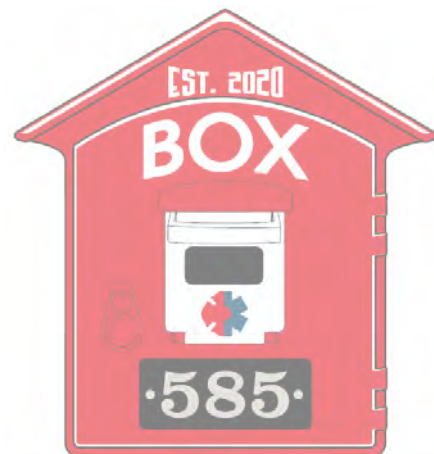
The best tool based on the size and weight distribution is the Rex Tool (See Picture 3). The tool is small enough to not be cumbersome, and the center of gravity is shifted to the head of the tool which creates a small hammer. A good practice when advancing in high heat, zero visibility conditions is to prod out in front with the tool for obstructions (victims) if there is nothing in front, hammer the tool down to check the integrity of the floor, and then advance.

There are not many “always” and “nevers” in the fire service. Firefighters assigned to conduct a primary search in residential structures do not always have to enter the same door as the hose-line is advancing though, they do not have to always enter via a door. Firefighters also do not always have to

search with a tool, there are times when searching without a tool is warranted and there are times when searching with a tool is one hundred percent needed.



*Photo by Author*



**Louis A. Comenale III** is a Captain with the Gates Fire District. He is an instructor with Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC. He is a third-generation firefighter. He is a New York State Fire Instructor and a nationally certified Fire Service Instructor II. Lou has an associate degree in Fire Protection Technology.





# LEADERSHIP AND YOUR ACTIONS

BY STEFANO "STEVE" NAPOLITANO

We have all heard the sayings, "walk the talk" and "lead by example." These are two of the most common precepts regarding our personal actions and behaviors that we must abide by as leaders in the fire service. Moreover, I am confident that these were most likely passed on to you as we were promoted or elected to a management position.

However, do we take notice of them? Do we truly understand what they mean? Did we listen and acknowledge this wisdom that was passed on to us, or did we simply shake our head in agreement so we could move forward and completely disregard the imparted insight?

We cannot expect those under our command to follow if we do not lead by example. Well, I guess that is not entirely true. We can order someone to perform a task, but is that what you want? Do you find joy in barking an order? Do those who you are barking at appreciate this approach? Are there future implications to this methodology? What is the level of customer service or the quality of work and effort expended because of this approach?



*Photo by Howard Owens*

It should be the desire of anyone in a leadership position to want the subordinates under their command to mimic the positive actions displayed during the discharge of their duties as well as in their personal actions. This results in completed tasks at the hand of individual initiative or following just a single request.

Conversely, those we lead expect the same from us. They seek action; not lip service. You do not garner respect if you subscribe to the "do as I say, not as I do" philosophy of leadership. I can assure you that this attitude is quickly apparent and will result in a complete lack of respect from your team.



*Photo by Howard Owens*

Moreover, we do not want those negative traits or actions that reflect poorly on our agency, city, village, town, etc., notwithstanding that fact that those in distress regularly call upon us to resolve their problems in times of crisis and expect 100% in knowledge and effort.

So, how does one "walk the talk?" The answer: be honest. While a simple concept, at times can prove to be one of the most complicated things that we do in the fire service, especially as a Fire Officer.



*Photo by Howard Owens*

If we lead by a good, positive example we have an opportunity to make those under our command successful both now and in the future while contributing (or influencing) our teams' success.

Unfortunately, there are many influences that can derail us from leading by example and we must be cognizant of this. These influences can be a result of both internal and external sources. Nonetheless it is imperative that we find a balance and use our moral compass to make the best decision possible. Emotions, personal preferences, and attitudes must be maintained and used in a manner that enhances the overall mission of the organization.

Merriam-Webster defines the word action (singular) as a thing done, deed, the accomplishment of a thing usually over a period of time, in stages, or with the possibility of repetition. Action (plural) behavior, conduct.

Whether you are a leader, a follower, or somewhere in between, I highly recommend that you "walk the walk." Your actions speak volumes, and you will enjoy the respect of your colleagues, friends, and those whom we serve.

**Stefano "Steve" Napolitano** is the Chief of Department for the City of Batavia (NY) Fire Department serving since 2017. He began his fire service career in 1986 as a volunteer firefighter for the Village of Frankfort (NY) Fire Department where he remained until being hired by the Herkimer Fire Department in 1991 serving in an on-call position and gaining a full career appointment in 1996 and held multiple ranks within the department.

Chief Napolitano is a New York State Fire Instructor, instructing outreach classes and at the New York State Academy of Fire Science working with the Recruit Firefighter Training, Fire and Emergency Service Instructor and Fire Officer programs.

He also serves on several boards including the Board of Directors for the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs and holds degrees in Mechanical Engineering, Fire Protection Technology and a master's degree in Executive Fire Service Leadership.







# THE WORST CASE SCENARIO

## PART 2: AIR & DRAGS

BY CHUCK HAMMON

In the last edition of Box 585 Magazine, I laid the foundation for the **absolute** need for all firefighters to be trained in self survival techniques and rapid intervention tactics. The Project Mayday statistics show this need, and we will continue to travel this path with rapid intervention techniques for area firefighters to continuously practice.

Part 1 focused on packaging yourself or firefighters for removal. Part 2 will expand upon the packaging principles and begin the next steps in the firefighter removal sequence. Now, disclaimer time, rapid intervention has many, many ways of completing the same task. We recommend all firefighters complete a formal rapid intervention course. These articles are simple concepts that can be adapted to your department and for your trainings, but they are not all encompassing.

### AIR

Be familiar with your department's RIT air supply pack. It is imperative you know this life-saving tool and train with it regularly. The universal air connection (UAC) hose is the preferred connection for a downed firefighter with limited or no air. The simplest drills can have a profound impact so practice connecting the hose to the UAC on a downed firefighter's airpack. Do this in no-light, low-light, or blindfolded. It's all about feel. (*Warning: Manufacturers do not want the packs to be on during this process, it is done for emergencies only*).

If your SCBAs are equipped with the low-pressure buddy breathing connections, make sure everyone is trained on the pros and cons of using this connection. This can also be done as a simple training drill in no-light, low-light or with a hood obscuring your vision. Stress can be placed on the members when they turn off their own bottles and must make the connection before running out of air.

Replacing a mask-mounted regulator (MMR) or full facepiece should be priority training drill that each member should perform. This becomes a dexterity issue and practice will not make perfect but the firefighter receiving the MMR or new facepiece will appreciate some finesse in this technique. *Be careful not to pull hair or rip someone's nose off.*

There are options for making the facepiece easier to install. Large loops or the addition of a garden hose or piece of 1/2 inch rope in the netting can aid in the donning with gloves. This should be trained on in multiple positions from seated, supine, or face down.



Photos by Author



Once the emergency air supply is attached, whether it be the high-pressure, low-pressure hoses, or a MMR/Facepiece, the air supply needs to be attached to the downed firefighter to prevent it from being disconnected. Firefighters that practice RIT drills know, there is a high potential of the facepiece or air supply becoming jarred during horizontal or vertical removals. We must minimize this by attaching the air supply in a way that won't impede our progress in removal.

Our RIT packs have additional carabiners affixed to simply connect the pack to the downed firefighter. This task is completed as part of the initial downed firefighter packaging or can be done to yourself if you are ever in a situation where you need to be prepared for a removal (i.e., fallen through a floor into the basement).



Attach the Air Supply to the Firefighter

## DRAGS

In a real-world situation, or the need for rescue, I think we can all agree when it comes to saving ourselves or each other we will resort to brute strength, adrenaline, and relentless tenacity to move someone or ourselves to a safe place. A maintained level of fitness is required to do this blue-collar job and next time you are at the dinner table, look around and ask yourself "can I move my fellow

firefighters if the needed me to?" "Could they move me?" (Strength and Fitness is a topic not addressed here but should be addressed in your firehouse). Proper packaging options were discussed in Part 1. These are options for drags.

The simplest form of firefighter drags is the straight arm grab. Attention should be paid to the grip, the straight arm (your bicep will tire faster than your arm and upper body as a whole), and the focus on using the big muscles of your legs to drive the pull. Dig your boots in the ground and drive!



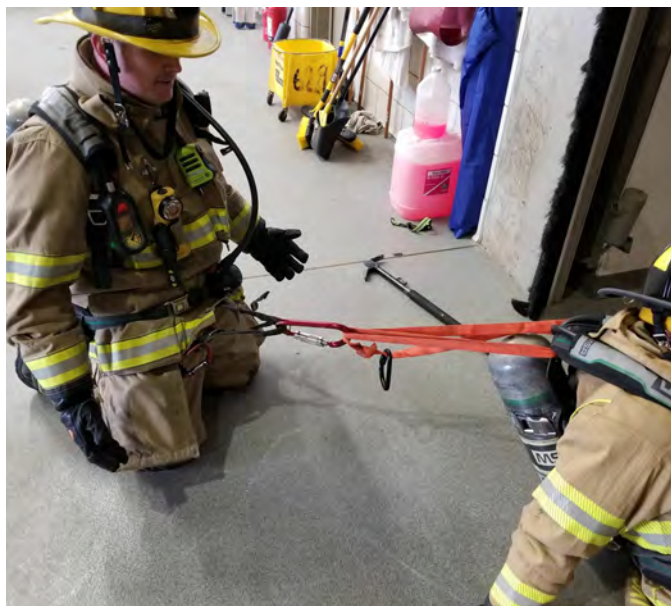
To add some distance between you and the firefighter a simple girth of webbing can provide a handle or a shoulder loop to aid in the drag. Like a magician, you will see firefighters remove loops of webbing from pockets, from their sleeves, or from their knee padding. Just make sure its quickly accessible.



Short webbing (10') handles



If you are equipped with an internal harness (discussed in Part 1), you can quickly convert your harness to be used in a bear crawl. Like pushing a sled in football or a workout, you are driving with your legs.



Bear Crawl Conversion

drag, the use of hand tools or longer webbing can make the horizontal move easier. But, situational awareness should forever be a priority. Two firefighters using a tool, or webbing loops, trying to go through door frames, up or down stairwells, or down residential hallways cannot be done two-wide. Practices removals in all different environments.



Longer webbing used to offset the two rescuers going through a door frame or hallway



Using a short bar or halligan for handles. Our kit has a 3' steel NY hook attached to the RIT pack.





Be aware not to wedge everyone in door frames while dragging. Have a plan!



If walking is permitted, a 6' NY Hook can be used. With all removals, make sure there is limited slack in all straps. An attic ladder can be used closed.



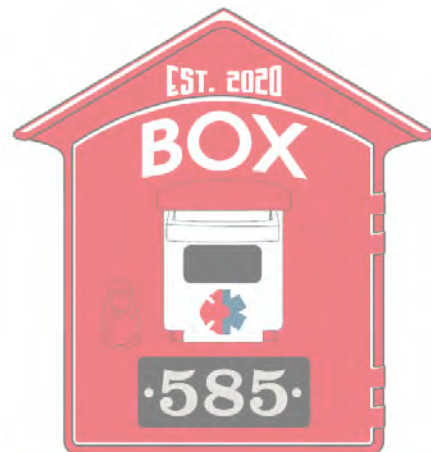
If the harness is converted using the XL carabiner through the shoulder straps, the XL carabiner can be used as a handle.

## SUMMARY

These techniques are not the only horizontal/drag removal concepts. For example, you can use an open attic ladder with the downed firefighter face down or use a commercial RIT board, a MAST sling link, or a mega-mover. Your department may have guidelines and you should practice those regularly. But if plan A doesn't work, learn plan B through Z.

As firefighters we are problem solvers and we may need to execute multiple plans to accomplish a task. This task, is the "worst-case scenario." It should be one of the highest priorities of your, or any department. Train to fight fire, train to survive, train to save.

In Part 3, we will focus on interior vertical removals. The foundation is to package efficiently, connect the air supply, and pick a plan so we can get out.



**Chuck Hammon** is a lieutenant with the Henrietta Fire District. He is the founder of Box 585 Fire Training and Performance LLC. Chuck is a New York State Fire Instructor in Monroe County and at the New York State Fire Academy Recruit Firefighter Training (RFFT) Program. He has a bachelor's degree in Fire Service Administration and an associates degree in fire protection technology. He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Managing Fire Officer Program, an IAFF Peer Fitness Trainer, and began his career with the City of Batavia Fire Department.





# ARE YOU PREPARED FOR EXTRICATION? **PART 1 – THE PREPARED INCIDENT COMMANDER**

BY TODD BANE

It is often said in the fire service that, "As goes the first line goes the fire". The same could be argued for extrication and what happens at the scene with arriving companies. Extrication has become much more of a challenge for crews especially with new vehicle construction. New metals and composites, upgrades in glass and supplemental restraints, seat construction and vehicle propulsion can totally change the way extrication is performed. Are you, as the IC, ready to lead and troubleshoot problems on these scenes? It is understood that depending on the size of your department and response on any given day, you may have to play dual roles. We will look at all the divisions separately for this series.

The public expects a lot out of their responders and quite honestly, sometimes too much. In reality we need to be able to provide well trained rescuers that are competent, effective and professional to customers when they call. From the IC down to the tool operators, if you are just removing a door or working a major extrication with heavy entrapment, it is important not to lose sight with what is happening on your scenes. We will look at all 4 of the divisions of a MVA with entrapment, Incident Command, Operations, Rescue and the tool operators.

**Incident Commander (IC)-** Size up starts at the time of alarm. In many cases, the call you are dispatched to is not the call you arrive at. Items to take into account are-

**1.** What type of Motor Vehicle Accident has been reported? Are radio updates consistent or not? Usually, the worse the accident is the more reports you may receive. Start running through your procedures in your head while en-route. Head on, Rollover, T-bone, think what may you have to order your units to do when they arrive.

**2.** Upon arrival, a good scene size up is essential. **DO NOT LOOK AT THE ACCIDENT- LOOK AT THE SCENE.** Get the big picture so it can be broken down into parts. It may be helpful while arriving on scene, to stop at a short distance away or slow significantly to look at what you are arriving at:

- The whole scene and safety issues – Fluids, electricals or hydro (for our Canadian friends), number of vehicles, attitude of vehicles (on wheels, roof side etc.) and is there something else going on (highly agitated people, fight)? Is approaching the scene safe for your responders? This should be also part of your report while pulling up.

- Type of accident and damage to the vehicles that you find upon arrival will cause your plan to vary. A side impact accident (T-Bone) collision has to be handled very different than a head-on or rear impact. Do you as an IC have a plan in your mental toolbox for all of this? That about a rollover accident that also includes side impact damage with passenger compartment intrusion?

- The interior size up. Look for what the entrapment is, check for any possible impalements, number of victims and other dangers to responders. As IC, victim count is essential and a quick survey of possible injuries.



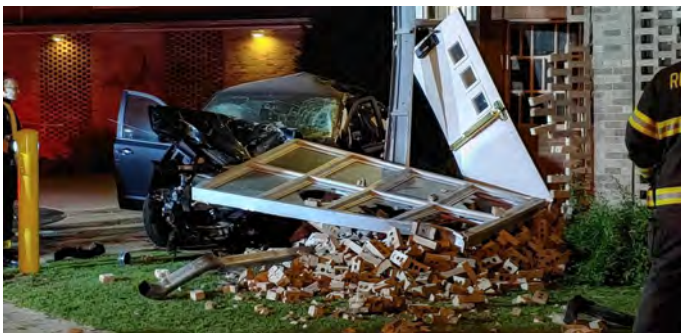
Photo by Guy Zampatori Jr.

- **THE LARGEST DRAWBACK** for the IC is the scene survey is often quick and meant to provide an overview to start developing a plan. As stated above the IC initial plan may need to be changed due to conditions found by the Ops Officer or Rescue Officer.

**3. RESCUE PLAN** - As an IC, setting the stage for your Operations Officer is important. It must be understood by your Operations Officer and Rescue Division leader. The plan should be actionable and executable. Your plan also may have to be subject to change to adapt to conditions. If you as an IC are not well versed in extrication, your Operations Officer or Rescue Officer can develop the plans.

**4.** Your Rescue Division Leader should provide progress reports to your Operations Officer by either radio, face to face or runner and keep you aware of any problems or the need to go to plan B or C.

**5.** As an IC your main job is to provide your Operations Officer and Rescue Division Leader with the tools they need to get their job done and so on down the line.



*Photo by Guy Zampatori Jr.*

As a competent IC there are many other issues that are involved with motor vehicle accidents.

- **Traffic** – This is something that must be managed and put into your plan also. Keep in mind, that closing roads can back everything up and depending on your location, it could cause a problem for hours. If you are fortunate to have fire police that can handle the traffic for you, make sure they know what you want. Road closures, although sometimes very necessary can cause delays for incoming or mutual aid units.

- **Unified Command Issues**- On severe MVA's it is better to have command resources from other agencies with you rather than wondering the scene or playing by-stander. Try to get them all in one place to cut down on radio traffic and duplication of requests. Make sure you know what they are requesting to come to the scene, you will have to put it somewhere.

- **Resources** – Local, State and other resources also have to be coordinated and managed. You know who they are in your specific area. The needs of and safety of the rescuers and patients come first.

- **Media** – The need to fill a 24-hour news cycle now is something that IC's may need to deal with. Keep in mind that these people have a job to do also. There is no need to get into specifics here but keep in mind they are trying to get information.

I hope that the point has been made that you, as an IC have plenty of tasks to accomplish during extrication operations. Trust in your staff and be kept informed on progress or setbacks. Do not let the scene get in front of you where it is difficult to correct. And use the positives and negatives to adjust and improve your training.

**Todd Bane** is a member of Bushnell's Basin Fire Department and has been there for 42 years and served as chief twice. He has been teaching vehicle rescue since 1984. He was chief of the Greater Rochester International Airport and retired in 2016 after 31 as a firefighter. He has taught aircraft rescue, heavy vehicle rescue, VROL and bus extrication for Monroe County. After retiring he worked for Code 4 Hurst Jaws of life for 3 years. He is currently living in Broadway North Carolina with his wife of 31 years. Besides his family and granddaughters, his greatest love is teaching extrication.



# BE THE WORST FIREFIGHTER IN THE ROOM

BY ANDY YOUNG - VIGILANT FIRE SERVICE TRAINING, LLC

No, I'm not telling you to stop working hard or to suddenly become lazy and quit. What I am talking about is surrounding yourself with firefighters that are so great, you strive to be better yourself. It has been said that you are the sum of the 5 people you are around the most. Well, if we're working a 42-hour work week every week, at least a couple of the firefighters on your crew will be on that list of 5 people. How much are those other firefighters going to affect you?

Think of your first couple of months in the firehouse. The people around you were all senior to you. You were probably looking at those senior firefighters and thinking of how much you wanted to be like them. Maybe your opinions of those firefighters have changed but back then, it definitely had an impact on the course of your career. If you were modeling yourself after quality firefighters, you probably grew up to be a quality firefighter. If you modeled yourself after shitbags... well, you probably aren't reading fire service training magazines anyway.

We all want to walk into the room with our chest puffed out and know that we're the big alpha dog in the room. That can be the result of two different things. The first situation, that we all want to assume is the case, is that you actually are great. You train hard, you learn, you really are fantastic and everywhere you go, you are the best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be. Well, if you're Bret "The Hitman" Hart, thank you for reading my article, sorry about Montreal. If you're anyone else, you probably aren't that amazing.

The reality of the situation is that if you are the best in the room, everyone else around you is worse than you. That is YOUR CREW that you're talking about. Is that acceptable? To have YOUR CREW not be the best around? Not for me it isn't. No, I want to be on the absolute best crew.

It isn't as simple as just being on the right crew though. Work has to be done to make yourself the worst firefighter in the room. You can beg and plead with your chief to transfer you if you want, but sometimes that simply is not an option. Sorry, you've got to make the changes. There are a couple of ways to go about this and we're going to discuss them.

First of all, Attitudes are contagious. So if you are on a crew of firefighters that are excited to come to work every day, love their jobs and can't wait to get training, you will eventually follow suit. Unless you have the ultimate shitbag attitude, those people do exist, unfortunately. On the other hand, if your crew complains constantly, just wants to be in the recliner or at home, where do you think you'll end up? You know crews on both sides of this spectrum. Or perhaps you're reading this while sitting in the recliner next to members of one of these crews and thinking "I've gotta break this cycle." Well, the only way to break a cycle of negativity is to address it and actively change it. If it is the entire crew, sit down at the sacred kitchen table and say "I think that we're too negative and need to change our attitudes." We're adults here, we should be able to talk about our problems.

The other thing that you have to do is to simply have a positive attitude. Maybe this is going to be a constant struggle some days, but on those days resist the urge to bitch. If you are in a good mood every shift and bring a good attitude with you, the people around you will begin to adopt that positive attitude as well. Unfortunately though, attitude alone will not make this all work out.

The other side of that coin is to actually be technically proficient at your job. I know, hell of a concept. But there is nothing more important.

I could be happy to show up to my job as a heart surgeon every day because of my big fat paycheck and the hot nurse that helps me on the operating table, but I'd kill every single patient because I have no idea how to perform heart surgery. The reality is, those people exist in the fire service too. Guys that really like being at work and saying that they're a firefighter but haven't the slightest clue how to deploy a ladder. We need to train and be good at the skills that go along with our job.

Some of the best firefighters I know, are thought of as being so good because they excel at the basics. Stretching a line, throwing a ladder, cutting a roof, forcing a door. What else is there? The constant criticism I hear for not training the basics is the cliché "do it for the gram" crowd. You've all seen firefighters say (on Instagram) that they are sick of seeing people post some fancy advanced technique just to make a cool video. I would argue that the firefighter throwing advanced ladder techniques, probably knows the basics pretty well. Not 100% of the time, but pretty likely. The question that I would have is, can your whole crew do that? If not, are you really the best?

Passing it on has always been an incredibly important part of the fire service. It is your **RESPONSIBILITY** to train the people that come on the job after you. With that being said, if your crew is not also exceeding expectations, you are not doing an important part of your job. The phrase "only as strong as the weakest link" doesn't just mean that the crew is weak, it means that **YOU** are weak as well. Train not only to make yourself better. Train to make your crew better. Not only that, but train to make your crew better than **YOU**.

Alright, time for the big question, why? One reason is that when you aren't the strongest in the room, it will expose your weak points. This is a complex and complicated job with a lot of different facets and too many skills (both psychomotor and cognitive) to always remember all the time. If the people around you are better in one aspect or another, it will show you where you need to improve yourself. If you are never challenged on what you think you know, you'll never find these weaknesses

**BE THE WORST FIREFIGHTER IN THE ROOM**

to train. Once you train those weaknesses, you'll become a better and more well-rounded firefighter.

It will also help you improve your strengths. If you think that you are the best guy on the planet and stretching a handline to a bedroom and somebody comes in and beats you next week, are you just going to say "oh well, guess I'm getting old." If that is your answer, go take a different test or retire. Your response should be "you won't beat me again." With that reaction, it will force you to figure out how you got beat and improve on those points to be better next week. If every week you came in and beat everybody, what reason would you have to improve? If you train the people around you to be better than you, you'll have to catch up to them. In turn, you'll create a cycle of improvement for the entire crew.

We should all be trying to improve ourselves each day. Part of being a good firefighter is being a good teacher. Even if you are not going to become a Fire Instructor, it is still your responsibility to train the people junior to you. So to call yourself a good firefighter, you need to also help create good firefighters. If you can let go of the pride and try to make those around you better than you, you will force yourself to get better too. Keep training, keep learning and stay safe.



**Andy Young** is a career firefighter in Upstate New York. He is a nationally certified Fire Service Instructor II and works for Vigilant Fire Service Training, LLC.





# JACK OF ALL TRADES

BY IAN PALMER – THIN LINE FITNESS

It's a designation we all hear, and one most of us take with pride; "Jack of All Trades". We are the do-all for our community, minus the work of our brave brothers and sisters in blue. It is almost a weekly occurrence to see photos on social media of firefighters rescuing animals out of sewers, assisting a citizen with a small home repair, or other beautiful acts of kindness. We do all of this, while also performing our "regular duties" of fire extinguishment (of homes, cars, land, and more), motor vehicle accident rectification, EMS services from overdose wake-ups to CPR and heart attack remedies, electrical wires down, vehicles into buildings, water rescue, trench rescue, collapse rescue, rope rescue, and more than that! We are truly a different breed. Our craft is the craft of many.

Looking at that list, many of us can say we are proficient in most if not all of those tasks expected of us by the community and leadership. So how does your fitness compare? As a firefighter, our fitness has to be at the same level as what is expected of us. We need to be strong as we are fast, we need to have endurance as much as we have power. Our fitness level has to be that of a Jack of All Trades.

So how do we do that? We train that way of course! As with our training and our calls, our fitness should also diversify training session to training session. There is no law that says because you're doing heavy deadlifts that you can't also finish off with 30 minutes of cardio. There's no rule saying you can't do plyometrics the same day as squats. If you feel like doing a "power" movement the same day as an "endurance" routine, do it! Be as different as your calls!

Speed/Power movements are some of the most underutilized and misunderstood movements that a firefighter, or any responder, can perform. We need them for a multitude of tasks on the fireground, such as lifting a patient, forcing a door, throwing a ladder and

advancing a handline just to name a few.

When I mention "speed" and "power", I'm not just talking about sprints, though short sprints are a great speed exercise, but there is much more than what many think of when the terms "speed" and "power" are brought up. These include exercises such as hang-cleans, power-cleans, deadlifts, box jumps, ladder drills, and my favorite; sled pushes. All of these movements are performed in short, fast motions and generally in reps of one or two with long rest periods.

What's great about the on-scene movements mentioned above, is they generally also require more than just speed and power. They require endurance. To get the ladder in place, we first need to carry it there, then eventually climb it. Advancing a handline, especially while flowing, requires a great amount of cardiac output. Once we lift a patient, we then need to carry or drag them to our designated point.

Working our cardio and endurance can be done in more fun ways than just running mile after mile. Though distance running is a great way to do it, many don't have an hour in their day to run, and added time to recover. A favorite of mine are interval sprints. You can do these in any interval you choose, though the most popular is the ":20/:10", meaning 20 seconds of rest and 10 seconds of work. If you're looking to extend your time on the cardio equipment or outside on your runs, extend the interval to 40 seconds of rest and 15 or 20 seconds of work. I recommend doing a three minute warm-up and obvious stretching before doing these sprints. You can also perform "ladder sprints", meaning a designated number of 10, 20, 30 and 40 meter sprints with correlating break times. So the 10m sprints would have a :10 second break time before performing the next, the 20m would have a :20 second break, and so on.



Specific weighted movements any firefighter can use to work on their muscular endurance as well as to get a great workout, are the Turkish Get-Up and kettlebell swings. These movements are spectacular when coupled with sets of power-cleans, hang-cleans or cardio intervals. An amazing aspect about the Turkish Get-Up is you need to really focus on your balance, breathing and coordination, which benefits us all greatly.

Strength is the last point in the crown of fitness-trades for our Jack. It is no secret that a strong person is a useful person. Mark Rippetoe said it best when he said "Strong people are harder to kill than weak people, and more useful in general". We need to be relied upon to accomplish extraordinary tasks in extraordinary events. I personally train to be strong enough to rescue our biggest firefighters as well as the biggest possible patients. I DO NOT want to have to live with the regret that I had to leave a brother or sister or victim behind because I was too weak to do my job. I know nobody wants to live with that. So we need to train for it.

My favorite strength movements are undoubtedly deadlifts and squats. I could write an entire doctoral thesis on why these two movements are superior to any other for firefighters, but I'll keep it short and sweet. As I've mentioned in my other articles, deadlifts work virtually every muscle in our bodies when performed correctly. When our deadlift gets "higher" in weight, that is a true indicator we ourselves are becoming stronger. If we can deadlift a certain weight for more reps, that is an indicator our muscular endurance is increasing on-top of the fact we are also getting stronger.

Squats are not far behind on the scale of muscles used while performing the movement. Obviously, performing a squat on a smith machine will be different. Almost virtually useless and as useless as the leg-press machine, I recommend steering clear of use of both for any movement, but especially a squat. The movement of the squat works our legs, as is obvious by anyone who has felt the DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness) from a good leg day a few days prior. Our legs are the

workhorses of our bodies, they power us and drive us. Many studies have linked overall strength gains to weighted squats, and it's obvious when you feel how many more muscles are used than just your legs while performing the movement.

Other strength movements that should be utilized by firefighters include the standing shoulder press (using both barbell and single-arm using dumbbells), kettlebell swings, push-ups and pull-ups, to name a few. Not only do these movements all strengthen specific body parts, but are also adaptable to work on your core and balance.

In conclusion, treat your fitness like your job. Serious and adaptable to any situation you are going to eventually encounter. Be able to do everything plus more that is required of you.

*To have your own personal fitness program developed or to get a fitness program established for your fire department, contact Thin Line Fitness today. [Thinlinefit@gmail.com](mailto:Thinlinefit@gmail.com)*



**Ian Palmer** is a career fireman at the Ridge Culver Fire Department in Irondequoit, NY. He is a personal trainer, IAFF Peer Fitness Trainer, The lead fitness instructor at Montour Falls, and the owner of Thin Line Fitness. He has been a firefighter for a combined 12 years between volunteer and career, and strongly believes that good fitness is the foundation to build a good firefighter.





# TRUCK BAY DIY: HOSE STRETCH BOTTLE

**CHUCK HAMMON**

Taught in the New York State Engine Company Operations course and on many urban fire department engines, there is a cheap and simple hose stretch solution for you to add to your engine company.

Whether your making an exterior hoseline stretch/hoist because the standpipe system isn't working or no existent, or you have plenty of multi-story garden style apartment buildings in your first-due, or you know stretching to a roof top HVAC unit fire can be challenging with limited manpower, the hose stretch bottle is a quick way to get the line moving and hoisted. Tie it off and drop the bottle.

At a cost of under \$15 you can set your engine up for efficiency with an empty bleach bottle and some utility rope. Every firehouse has or will have an empty bottle of bleach or windshield washer fluid. For this project, I just bought a 3/8" 100' utility rope from a big box store. In my engine company classes, I incorporate these on skill nights and found the nylon twisted utility ropes do not hold up well being pulled over railings and edges. This time I went with diamond braided polypropylene utility rope.

You only need an empty bottle/jug, 75' of utility rope, and a utility carabiner. 1/2" rope does not fit when trying to get fifty plus feet in the bottle but it is always your preference. You may see some bottles have a hand-sized cut out on the side opposite of the handle to aid in repacking or grabbing a bight. A hoseline and nozzle has weight, so I used a rope and carabiner able to support that load.

Of course, you probably have a utility rope bag on your engine and can achieve the same results but this option is available for only a small investment.



NYS OFPC ECO Slides

**SUBSCRIBE TO BOX 585 MAGAZINE  
CLICK HERE**

## **BOX 585 FIRE TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE LLC**



**2021 - ISSUE 1  
PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2021**

**WWW.BOX585FIRE.COM**

**WANT TO CONTRIBUTE CONTENT OR SHOWCASE  
YOUR PRODUCTS?**

**GO TO OUR WEBSITE AND SEND US A MESSAGE!**