



## SEARCH (2.2)

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- NFPA reference 1710 - Chapter 5

### TASK SKILL DESCRIPTION AND DETAIL

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Performing a primary and a secondary search during a structure fire is a vital operation. It is one of the benchmarks of LFRA operations. The purpose is to locate any savable lives that may be trapped or incapacitated inside the structure, and employ standard victim handling techniques to remove them from the IDLH atmosphere. Firefighters must have a thorough understanding of search operations relative to the risk profile and strategy, must be proficient in the basic skills of search, and employ proper victim handling techniques (when needed). The speed of a search crew is based upon efficiency and being deliberate in movement, not in trying to go fast.

- Task: Searching a residential structure
- Completion of a primary search is one of the primary benchmarks of the initial fire ground tactics

### Search Positions

- **Wall Firefighter: Officer or Crew Leader**
  - **Priorities are:**
    - Complete a 360 of the structure
    - Lead the search
    - Maintain orientation by staying on the wall
    - Call out the direction of travel (see communications)
    - Call out the egress points
    - Monitor the conditions
    - Radio traffic
    - Lead the room firefighter out if he/she is rescuing a victim
- **Room Firefighter (Search Firefighter): Firefighter or Engineer**
  - **Priorities are:**
    - Follow the wall firefighter
    - Sweep the middle of the room
    - Check behind the doors
    - Stay oriented
    - Repeat the directions of travel (see communications)
    - Search the individual rooms
    - Rescue victims found by the crew



## **Communications**

- **Before Entering the structure:**
  - “I’m the wall firefighter; we’re doing a right/left hand search. This is the \_\_\_\_\_ side.”  
The room firefighter repeats it back!
- **Inside the structure:**
  - Heading Delta-Heading Delta
  - Heading Charlie-Heading Charlie
  - Heading Bravo-Heading Bravo
  - Heading Alpha-Heading Alpha

## **Performing the Primary Search**

1. Sound the floor to make sure it is stable to go into the structure. This is done by the first firefighter into the structure which is usually the wall firefighter (see Figure 1).



Figure 1



2. After sounding the floor, visually search the area inside of the door before entering. The room firefighter will check behind the door. **Most victims will be found in means of egress, behind doors or under windows.**
3. The wall firefighter gets on the wall and begins to search in the direction that was established BEFORE entering the structure. The room firefighter positions in the room approximately 2 – 3' to the side and even with the back foot of the wall firefighter (see Figures 2 and 3). The wall firefighter calls out the direction they are heading and the room firefighter REPEATS it back. **Allow enough time for the room firefighter to check behind the door before proceeding with the search.**

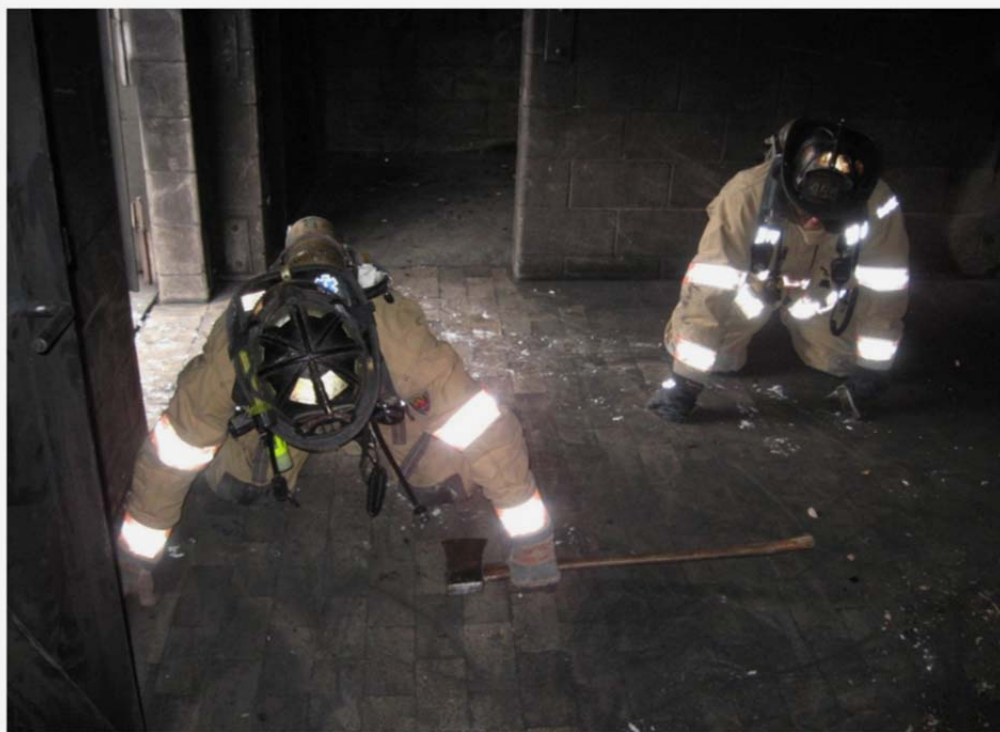


Figure 2



4. Maintain spacing with the wall firefighter leading the search. The room firefighter should never be in front of the wall firefighter (see Figure 3)!



Figure 3

5. The wall firefighter keeps their hand on the floor and against the wall during the search(see Figure 3). Do not “swim” the wall with a hand during a search.
6. The hand tool can be used as an extension of the arm in searching for victims (see Figure 3). This must be done in a controlled manner.



## Finding a Room

- The **wall firefighter** stays at the door to monitor the conditions, monitor the movements of the room firefighter and maintain radio communications (C.A.N. reports – conditions, actions and needs).
- The **room firefighter** will search the room.
- If a victim is found, the wall firefighter remains at the door unless the room firefighter requests assistance.



Figure 4

## **Going up or down stairs**

- Spread out- distribute your weight to the outside of the stairwell
- Stay balanced
- Sound the stairs

Exit the structure once the primary search is complete (all rooms and all floors). Notify the Support Group Supervisor once the crew has exited the structure (or IC if the group supervisor isn't established).





## Use your senses

- **Touch** - Feel for victims and points of egress, if you feel your partner-back off!
- **Sight** - If you have good visibility, you may be able to stand or crouch. This allows the search crew to perform a quicker search, but it is imperative to STAY ORIENTED! Conditions can change. Don't rely solely on TIC to maintain the orientation.
- **Listen** - In limited visibility it is important for the room firefighter to listen for the wall firefighter. The wall firefighter should be ahead of you slightly. Listen for each other, victims and the sound of the fire.

## Other Considerations

- **3 person search**
  - The officer follows behind the engineer and firefighter (or two firefighters) with the thermal imager. When there is a three person search crew, the engineer/firefighter and other firefighter perform the positions of the wall firefighter and room firefighter.
  - The officer should hold the position of the last tactical advantage and move at right angles (see Figure 5).
    - Tactical advantage points are doorways, windows, and/or exit points.
  - The officer monitors the conditions, monitors the movements of the crew and utilizes the TIC to assist in looking for victims.
  - The officer is responsible for radio traffic.

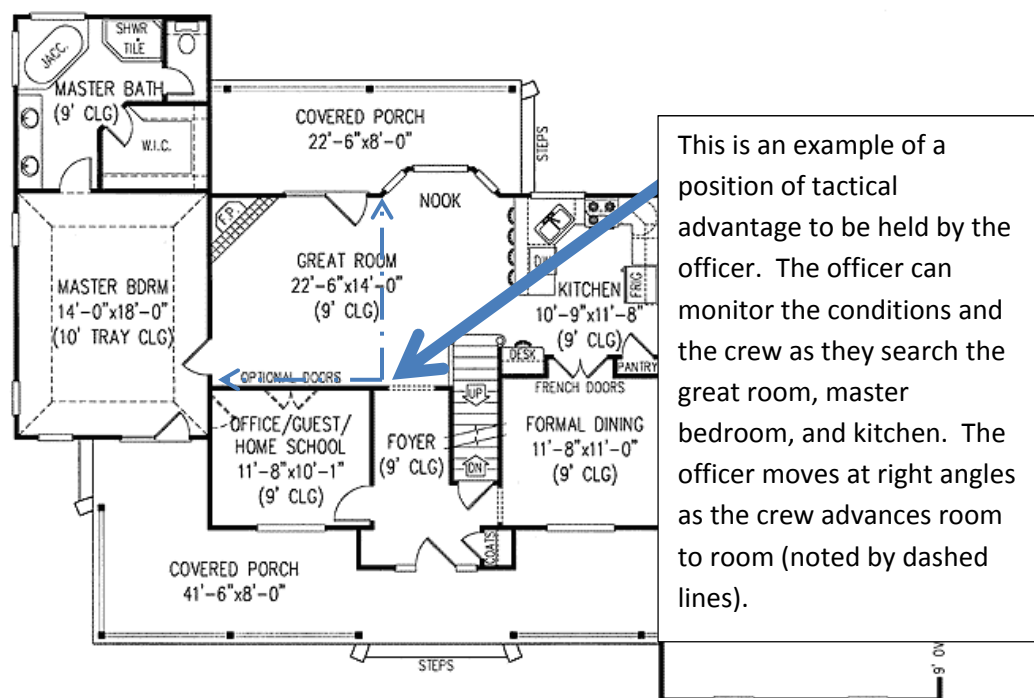


Figure 5



- **4 person search**
  - This technique should only be used on a large, residential structure or in the case of a confirmed victim
    - Officer discretion if a four person search is to be employed
  - Deploy the resources appropriately
    - One crew per floor
    - One crew searches left hand and one crew searches right hand
    - One crew focuses on victim removal while the other crew continues search operations
- **Tools/equipment**
  - Irons
  - Spare TIC battery
  - Door chocks
  - Webbing (if proficient in use)

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#### **REFERENCE INFORMATION**

- Victim Handling chapter
- Search power point presentation found on the V: drive