

# Los Angeles City Fire Department

## TRAINING BULLETIN

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### AN INDIRECT METHOD OF FIGHTING FIRES IN RAILROAD CARS

An Indirect Method of fighting fires in railroad cars containing cotton, dry express (unrefrigerated cargo), baggage and mail has been approved by the Department. If the Fire Commander should decide to use the indirect method the procedures used shall include keeping the car doors closed, cutting a small hole in the roof of the car directly above the fire, and inserting a fine spray stream in this hole. The fire within the car is subsequently extinguished by reduction of the temperature below ignition point, smothering the fire and/or eliminating oxygen within the car below the point required to continue combustion.

In extinguishing the fire, car doors are to remain CLOSED at all times until the fire has been extinguished. Locate the seat of the fire within the car by visual observation of paint blistering, hand exploration of car, or by wetting down the car with water and observing the location of the fastest rate of evaporation. Once the fire location has been determined, cut a small hole in the car roof, directly above the fire, just large enough to insert and move a spray nozzle from side to side. This can be accomplished best with an axe. The roof material is usually metal, single thickness or double thickness separated by an insulating material, which can be penetrated easily with an axe. Water in a fine spray form should then be introduced through the hole into the car to cover the fire area.

The car doors should not be opened until it is evident that the fire is extinguished. To be certain extinguishment is complete a waiting period of ten minutes should elapse after smoke is no longer visible from the hold in the car roof before opening car doors.

If the fire has already burned a hole in the floor of the car, this hole should be immediately plugged with a spray nozzle, if possible, while the indirect method is employed.

This indirect method permits extinguishment with less exposure to products of combustion and a minimum of water damage, The fire is further confined to its exact area of origin, making it easier to determine the true cause of the fire.

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COTTON: In box cars containing cotton, the Fire Commander should wait an hour, after smoke emission has stopped, before having doors opened.

To prevent rekindle in cotton, the bales which have been exposed to fire should be moved immediately to a safe place and laid out with approximately a bale width between bales for individual attention. Do not remove the bands from the bales unless it is absolutely necessary. To do so exposes more cotton to the possibility of fire and destroys the salvageable value of the bales.

Examine each bale and apply Wet Water to any spot that may be smoldering. As fire will burrow into the bale, it will be necessary to force the Wet Water into the burned area as far as possible, soaking it thoroughly. Continue the application of Wet Water as the bale is being overhauled. The Fire Commander should recommend that the bales involved in the fire be closely watched for several days after the fire is extinguished.

MAIL CARS: Postal authorities should be present when a mail car is opened.