

Los Angeles City Fire Department

TRAINING BULLETIN

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September 1975

TRAINING BULLETIN NO. 26

RECENT LESSONS LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

The "Lessons Learned" contained in the F-113's (Analysis of Greater Alarm Operations) often contain information that can be of value to other members of the Department. In order to share this information with personnel who were not involved in the actual incident, selected "Lessons Learned" and observations made by Training Section personnel will be published as "Recent Lessons Learned".

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RECENT LESSONS LEARNED1. CUTTING A CHAIN LINK FENCE

During fire fighting operations at a Greater Alarm Fire, a rotary saw was used to make entry through a chain link fence. Sufficient tension was not maintained on the fence, causing the rotary blade to bind. The rotary blade was destroyed because of this.

The rotary saw can be used for cutting a chain link fence, but it is a necessity that enough tension be kept on the fence to pull the cut portion of the fence away from the blade.

Most apparatus carry bolt cutters and wire cutters that can be used to cut a chain link fence. Because of the tension on many chain link fences, caution should be used at all times when cutting.

2. STANDPIPE INLETS

At a Greater Alarm Fire involving a ten story hotel, it was found that many members were not aware of the method used to remove breakaway caps from exterior standpipe inlets. Most were under the impression that the caps were breakable and needed only to be hit and they would shatter.

The correct method is to strike the ears of the plate at the point where the bolts come through. The ears have a notch or score mark on the rear.

Lay into all standpipe inlets if there is doubt to which ones will be used on the fire floor. Risers are not cross connected.

3. EFFECTIVE USE OF BLOWERS

At a recent fire involving a single family dwelling, blowers were placed in the front using the positive pressure ventilating method. The roof had two holes cut for ventilation and the fire was located on the second floor. The blowers sent fresh air to the fire causing acceleration of the fire and a back draft. As soon as the blowers were shut down the flames coming from the roof openings went out.

Positive pressure ventilation is very effective for venting heated gases and smoke, but if not used in a coordinated effort with the engine company operations, it can accelerate

the fire, cause back draft, push the fire into unburned areas and into other personnel that are fighting the fire.

4. VENTILATION OF A SEALED BUILDING

At a Greater Alarm Fire involving a 12 story sealed office building, four members were placed off duty with excess carbon monoxide in the blood. This was accumulated during overhaul operations.

A minimum number of personnel should be used during initial overhaul, until adequate ventilation is accomplished. Supervisors should insure that personnel are not working without the protection of breathing apparatus during overhaul in areas where noxious smoke or fumes may still be present.

5. HEAVY STREAMS

During fire fighting operations at a Greater Alarm Fire, two ladder pipe streams and one snorkel stream were directed down into the rear area where the fire had burned through the roof of a large one story commercial occupancy. This action reduced the effectiveness of hand lines being advanced from the front and prevented the effective use of hand lines from the rear of the building.

Officers are directly responsible for the effective use of hose streams by personnel under their command. This is not just an initial responsibility, but is continuous as long as streams are in operation.

Company Officer's responsibility when heavy streams are in operation:

- a. He should know where the stream is going.
- b. He should know that the stream is doing an effective job.
- c. That heavy streams should be shut down when they are no longer needed and this fact relayed to the Section or Fire Commander.
- d. Hand lines should be advanced as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

6. FLAMMABLE LIQUID SPILL

Operations at a tank truck fire on the freeway resulted in the following lessons learned. These items should be considered when large amounts of flammable liquids are involved.

- a. It is preferable to lay hose lines from surface streets to freeways via over and underpasses, or down on or off ramps rather than across freeway lanes.
- b. There is a need for greater knowledge of the freeway drainage systems among fire personnel.
- c. Apparatus operators should use caution when parking apparatus in the vicinity of storm drain openings where the possibility exists that fire may erupt from them.

7. **FALLING GLASS**

At a Greater Alarm Fire involving a Hi-Rise office building the problem of falling glass created a serious problem to firefighters and equipment. An engine laying a supply line to the front of the building was forced to move to a better location because of the falling glass. Falling glass ruptured a 2-1/2" supply line and also severed a field phone wire leading into the building.

These items should be considered when responding to any incident that falling glass could create a problem.

- a. Apparatus should not be spotted under fire area of building or in a position that would jeopardize men and equipment.
- b. Plans for blocking street and sidewalk under the fire need to be initiated very early in the emergency operation.
- c. Care must be taken in laying field phone wire into building so that falling glass does not sever it.
- d. When windows are out on more than one floor, glass fragments being removed from upper floors can fall inside lower floors.