

NIOSH Firefighter Fatality Investigation Program

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Key Issues



- Upward trend in traumatic fatalities during offensive, interior firefighting operations
 - Failure of NIOSH to adequately address fire behavior and limited understanding of fire dynamics as a causal or contributing factors
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- Size-Up & Risk Assessment
- Tactical Ventilation

Knowledge of practical fire dynamics is critical

Recommendations

- Emphasize the criticality of understanding fire behavior, causal factors in extreme fire behavior phenomena, and the influence of tactical operations such as fire control and ventilation on fire behavior.
 - Increase attention to fire behavior indicators when investigating incidents which may have involved extreme fire behavior as a causal or contributing factor in LODD.
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Recommendations

- Examine training in greater detail, with specific emphasis on fire behavior, situational assessment, realistic live fire training, and crew resource management.
 - Provide fire behavior training to all NIOSH investigators to improve their understanding of fire development, extreme fire behavior phenomena, and the impact of tactical operations.
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Recommendations

- Include a fire behavior specialist on the investigation team when investigating incidents that may have involved extreme fire behavior as a causal or contributing factor.
 - Initiate investigations quickly to avoid degradation of the quality of information obtained from the individuals involved in the incident and other witnesses.
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