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Sent: Saturday, February 07, 2009 3:20 PM
To: NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)
Cc: Chen, Jihong (Jane) (CDC/NIOSH/EID) (CTR)
Subject: 141 - FFUS Comments

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Comments

The fire service and the initial arriving incident commander must do a risk vs rewards analysis of the building on fire. Many times we arrive and find the occupants of a house or building on fire that has been evacuated. The I/C will determine whether an offensive or defensive strategy will be employed. It is the ultimate responsibility of I/C to develop strategies and tactics to resolve the incident. The personnel safety of their firefighters will always take precedence.

The recommendation from NIOSH to not enter a structure on fire when all occupants have exited is not an acceptable practice by the fire service. The United States will incur huge fire losses if this is the case. Insurance rates will go up placing an even larger financial burden on the owners. Many properties will be lost which could have been saved.

Blanket statements are not an acceptable practice that we should incorporate in the fire service. The fire ground is a dynamic environment and continuously must be monitored by the I/C and adjustments made tactically.

With the large number of foreclosures today many properties are vacant. Fire departments and firefighters are trained to extinguish fire, protecting life and property (Salvage and overhaul) are two key components. If property can be saved while reducing the exposure to our members we must attempt that.

Departments should develop their own policy of standard operating procedure for vacant structures in relationship to firefighting. Developing standards and training for strategies and tactics would be more beneficial than a blanket go or don't go policy. The NIOSH recommendation should not be considered.