

# Voices of Experience



I was acting as a lieutenant when we received a call about a possible structure fire: smoke was visible and residents were evacuating. While en-route my mind was racing, thinking of the decisions the lieutenant needs to make. Our engine was getting closer when I saw smoke blowing from the roof line of the house. I told the crew to prepare for an attack upon arrival.

We arrived on scene to find smoke coming from the roof line and the chimney. The front door was open and people were gathered on the front driveway. I gave my radio report and initiated a fast attack. I quickly questioned the occupants about any possible victims and possible locations of the fire. They stated that the fire was in the rear corner of the house and that all occupants were out.

I proceeded inside with my crew. The smoke was dark and low. We made our way towards the rear corner of the structure. My nozzleman found a door, tried to advance into it, and became stuck momentarily. I backed up and moved into an opening and that was when I felt the heat. It was quite considerable, but not too uncomfortable. I directed my nozzleman and another crew member to follow me into this opening. It was dark and hot. I heard on the radio that positive pressure ventilation was ready at the door and that a fire fighter was positioned at the rear corner for window removal. I got down on my hands and knees to see any fire in front of us. I moved my interior crew into position and radioed to take the window and start the positive pressure ventilation fan. We directed the stream onto the fire. The attack in coordination with the ventilation cleared the room of heat and smoke quickly.

It was later found that a mattress was completely burnt and most contents in the room had been consumed by the fire. But we made certain that the fire never advanced into the rest of the structure. Teamwork and communication is essential—especially when a new or acting position is filled.

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