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## Report of the Week

**Opposing hoselines are harmful to health and welfare.**

**09/16/2010**

**Report Number:** 10-0001046

**Report Date:** 08/12/2010 09:43

### Synopsis

Inexperienced FF finds a way out.

### Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Captain

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 16 - 24

Years of fire service experience: 0 - 3

Region: FEMA Region VII

Service Area: Urban

### Event Information

Event type: Fire emergency event: structure fire, vehicle fire, wildland fire, etc.

Event date and time: 04/26/1985 10:00

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event: Clear and Dry

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Situational Awareness
- Accountability
- Communication
- Command
- Teamwork

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury
- Lost time injury

### Event Description

We were dispatched for a house fire with a possible victim inside. I was on the first-in engine with an acting officer. I masked up while the officer pulled a 1 1/2" pre-connect to the back of the house and started flowing water into the basement window. The officer told me to search the interior for the possible victim. I proceeded to the front and waited for back-up.

We entered with a handline, searching down the center hallway of a ranch style home. As we entered the bedroom above where the fire was coming out the basement window, I was very cautious and took off my glove to feel the floor to see how the floor temperature was. Unable to reach the far side of the bed from the floor, I eased my weight onto the bed to search to no avail. We then

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proceeded to the bedroom across the hallway to the only room that had not been searched following the same procedure as the previous room. Only this time when I eased my weight onto the bed, the legs of the bed punched through the floor and I thought I was going to the basement. Visibility during these two searches was smoke to the floor, moderate heat and 1 to 2 feet of vision.

At this point in the fire, we had not gained access to the basement. We exited the building to get a new tank and report to the I.C. that the upstairs was clear. At this point the IC informed those of us that just came out that they had not yet gained access to the basement through the steel back door, and that he needed us to go through the interior to gain access. At this point I had not seen my officer since he pulled the pre-connect to the rear, and I had already soiled myself once.

Radio was marginal at best and not everyone had/has one; And most of the time if you are given orders face to face, it's never broadcast. So when told by the IC to enter the structure to locate the basement and then the fire, no one else knew it on scene. The good side of this was that I had already searched the house and knew where the kitchen was as well as access to the basement. The down side was that we arrived at that door the same time the back door was open and at the same time my officer opened the nozzle again on the opposite end of the house, thus driving the fire out the two openings that were now open. This pinned me and two FFs behind me to the floor from flames and heat. It was hot enough to make the aerosol cans next to me under the sink explode. I opened up the nozzle only to create more heat and steam to the floor. I turned to tell the other two FFs that we needed to back out, only to find they had already left. With visor melted, coat steaming and ¾ boots gooey, I found my way out and proceeded to look for someone to explain what had just occurred. At the time between the two FFs and I, we had less than 3 years experience.

### **Lessons Learned**

Maintain crew integrity.

Communicate.

Know your personnel.

### **Discussion Questions**

Opposing hoselines often result in injuries to firefighters. So the fireground should be organized so that each personnel know what the plan is, how the attack will take place and what each member's role is in the plan. In addition, having a strong command team ensures additional safeguards are in place to prevent hazards like opposing hoselines. Once you have read the entire account of [10-1046](#), and the related reports, consider the following:

1. What steps do you take to ensure all personnel on scene understand where the point of attack will take place?
2. If an opposing hoseline is identified on your department's fireground, how quickly can it be shut down and controlled?
3. Who or what controls the placement of hoselines on the scene of your department's structure fires?
4. What is the best advice you can give to your fellow firefighters to protect them if they are caught in an opposing hoseline situation?
5. Does your department provide portable radios for all riding positions? If not, what is the timetable and potential funding sources for acquiring them?

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## **Related Reports – Topical Relation: Opposing Hoselines**

[09-306](#)

[09-644](#)

[09-789](#)

[10-222](#)

[10-653](#)

Note: The questions posed by the reviewers are designed to generate discussion and thought in the name of promoting firefighter safety. They are not intended to pass judgment on the actions and performance of individuals in the reports.