



Table Top Training Drills

Table Top Training Exercise-June 2011

Flashover

Flashover is by far one of the most dangerous occurrences on the fire ground. Historically, firefighters nationwide have narrowly escaped or have been severely injured or killed in flashovers. At www.firefighternearmiss.com a keyword search revealed over 83 near-miss reports on flashovers. In near-miss report [05-254](#), command had recognized the signs of a flashover that was imminent and pulled the crews out of the structure. Had the incident commander not taken this action, the outcome would have been very different; the report is as follows:

“It was a trailer fire where by outside appearance, was not too large to knock the fire down right away. A complement of 3 engines, 1 truck, 1 rescue, and 2 battalion chiefs were arriving on scene. Upon entry it was evident that smoke was very heavy and it was hot as well. There were two crews inside the front door and we were breaking windows to ventilate the smoke to find the fire. Within seconds the smoke got extremely thick and very hot. After about 45 seconds inside, we were given the [fire department descriptor deleted] tones to evacuate from command out front. Immediately after we got outside, the trailer flashed over. We hit it from the outside and then went in to put it out one final time. Command had a good view from out front and saw the fire venting from the rear of the trailer working its way up to the front where we were attacking it. Everyone made it out and all went smooth. Without command noticing the flashover signs, we would have been inside. We have flashover training on our department and it paid off. We learned that a trailer fire can be as dangerous for flashover as a 'regular' house fire. All went well due to our training, but inside we could have been more aware of the signs indicating a hot fire leading to a flashover. It happens so fast.”

Retired FDNY Deputy Chief Vincent Dunn has researched and written about the signs, symptoms and solutions of this dangerous aspect of fire growth. Chief Dunn writes; *“Firefighters should know the definition of flashover. They should know the warning signs of this danger heat in smoke and rollover. Also firefighters must know how to delay flashover - a room bursting into flames. And most important for firefighters' safety and survival, they must know defensive firefighting procedures - how to search and stay live.”* The full report can be found at <http://vincentdunn.com/dunn/newsletters/july/flashover.pdf>