

**Training Announcement**



# TRUCK OPS: VENT-ENTER-SEARCH OPERATIONS

One of the fireground search techniques that seems to tweak a nerve is Vent-Enter-Search (VES). You'll hear people say things like, "We don't do that; it's too dangerous!" or "We don't have enough people to do that!" Simply put, VES is an approach to searching an area on the fireground where there's a pretty good chance that there's a victim in that area. In other words, either somebody on scene is telling you that there's a victim in there or you strongly suspect (based on a solid scene size-up) that there's a victim in there.

When it comes down to the actual technique of VES it involves a minimum of three basic firefighting skills (more depending on the situation). The three basic skills are Venting a window, Entering a window and Searching a room. For more involved operations (a second-floor window), you have to add the basic skill of throwing a ground ladder. If the VES operation is positive (you find a victim), the additional skill of rescue will have to be added to the list.

The bottom line is that when faced with certain fireground situations performing VES is the most viable search technique to get the job done. This session will review the basics of VES operations by looking at why and when to perform them—and why and when not to perform them. We'll then break down the individual components to highlight the importance of each to the entire operation. Finally we'll perform hands-on stations that will reinforce the basics of VES while allowing you to develop proficiency perform the skill.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Trainer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Truck Ops: Vent-Enter-Search Basics

### I. Why We Search...

- A. When and Why...
  - 1. All structures need to be searched...
    - a. not all at the front end
    - b. conditions PROCESSED on size-up will determine
    - c. any structure may be occupied
  - 2. Firefighting...and Searching...requires THINKING...rescue is not the same as recovery
  - 3. Probabilities must be used...a school during the day presents a different probability than a school at night
- B. Types of Fireground Searches
  - 1. Primary — a quick search, usually before the fire is brought under control — to search for and remove occupants
    - a. usually quick
    - b. usually high probability areas within
    - c. not as thorough as a *secondary search* due to the fireground conditions
  - 2. Secondary — a more thorough search, after the fire is brought under control *and* usually performed by a crew other than the primary search crew — to ensure no victims are present
    - a. more thorough than a primary search
    - b. may discover victims missed during the primary search
- C. Search Size-Up
  - 1. Combine initial dispatch and first-arriving size-up information with personal size-up information upon arrival
  - 2. Size and location of fire
  - 3. Structural integrity
  - 4. Possible/probable victim location
  - 5. Reported versus known victim location
  - 6. High-probability (target) areas (bedroom, exit, bathroom...)

### II. The Skills of Vent-Enter-Search

- A. Vent
  - 1. Search firefighter should be masked up and ready to enter—prior to venting the window
    - a. single firefighter should be ready to go 'on air' once window has been cleared
    - b. two-firefighter teams can have one firefighter vent while the other prepares to enter and search
  - 2. Window venting performed from the outside of the window to be entered
  - 3. Window should be cleared of all debris prior to entering
  - 4. Window opening should be allowed to *blow/exhaust* initial built up combustion products after venting
  - 5. Upper floor windows, that will be accessed using a ground ladder, should be vented with the ladder if possible
    - a. saves time/steps
    - b. allows ladder to be positioned correctly, immediately
- B. Enter
  - 1. Communicate to officer/Command...VES and entry location
  - 2. Enter low in window, rolling over the window sill
  - 3. Check integrity of floor prior to shifting weight from window sill to floor
  - 4. Once inside the window, orient yourself (breathing, positioning, room contents, fire and smoke condition, victim sounds, location of doorway...)
- C. Search
  - 1. Maintain orientation to window at all times — use a tool, rope...if needed
  - 2. Attempt to immediately locate door and close it
  - 3. Search high target areas of room first — bed, bathroom
  - 4. Consider possible victim locations based on known or reported victim types — adult, child, infant
  - 5. Monitor fireground conditions at all times

# Student Handout – 2 of 2



### III. Vent-Enter-Search Operations

- A. Initial Reports and Size-Up Information
  - 1. Identify the building type and potential for VES at outset
  - 2. Determine as much as possible while enroute — known victim / reported victim / vacant...
  - 3. Match what was heard with what is seen on arrival
- B. Targeting the Window(s)
  - 1. Determine window(s) to be searched using VES
  - 2. Bring all tools/equipment as you approach
  - 3. Determine your role in operation (vent / entry)
  - 4. Prepare to perform your role
  - 5. Communicate — with crew / Command prior to entry
- C. Performing VES
  - 1. Prepare and perform — mask on and ready
  - 2. Vent and clear the window — let it blow — place ladder if needed
  - 3. Enter the window and orient
  - 4. Find and close the door — report if no door or can't complete
  - 5. Search the room
  - 6. Communicate findings
  - 7. Victim found
    - a. let partner know victim found and have partner communicate to command — communicate finding if partner doesn't
    - b. move victim to window and out
    - c. request help from partner if victim is too large
  - 8. If possible, open door to allow interior environment to vent out window — judgement call...
  - 9. Exit...move to another window or next assignment

### IV. Communication and Vent-Enter-Search Operations

- A. Entry
  - 1. Communicate entry and location
  - 2. Message may be to officer or to Command — depending on department procedures and staffing
- B. Search / Rescue
  - 1. Communicate findings
  - 2. Possible messages — no door, victim found, no victims
  - 3. Communicate need to continue search of room if task wasn't completed due to location and removal of victim
- C. Exit / Next Task
  - 1. Communicate exit from structure
  - 2. Repeat communication sequence for each window being searched

### V. Victim Removal During Vent-Enter-Search Operations

- A. Infants and Children
  - 1. Should be able to remove without assistance
  - 2. Be aware of potential for other children in same location
- B. Adults
  - 1. May require assistance to remove — communicate need to partner as soon as possible
  - 2. Be aware of potential for children/infants in same location/under adult victims
  - 3. Request additional help to exit location before it's needed
- C. Through the Window or Out the Door
  - 1. Depends on interior conditions
  - 2. Depends on size of victim
  - 3. Depends on location in structure
  - 4. The quickest route may not be the easiest route
  - 5. The easiest route may not be the quickest route
  - 6. Communicate route of exit

# Truck Ops: Vent-Enter-Search Basics – Test



**VOLUME XV • ISSUE 12**

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ INSTRUCTOR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **The following types of structures should be searched:**
  - A. Occupied
  - B. Vacant
  - C. Commercial
  - D. All of the above
  
2. **The two basic types of fireground searches are:**
  - A. Occupied / Vacant
  - B. Pre-control / Under control
  - C. Primary / Secondary
  - D. All of the above
  
3. **Bedrooms, bathrooms, and exit paths should be considered:**
  - A. Routine search areas
  - B. High-probability search areas
  - C. Low-probability search areas
  - D. All of the above
  
4. **VES is a combination of basic fireground skills including:**
  - A. Venting a window
  - B. Entering a window
  - C. Searching a room
  - D. All of the above
  
5. **When performing VES operations, the SCBA cylinder should be turned on:**
  - A. After the window is vented
  - B. After the window is cleared
  - C. Before the window is vented
  - D. None of the above
  
6. **Communicating while performing VES operations should be done:**
  - A. Only if a victim is found
  - B. Before entry, during search, after exiting the window
  - C. Before entry and then only if a victim is found
  - D. All of the above
  
7. **If a victim is found during a VES operation:**
  - A. The searching firefighter should notify command
  - B. The searching firefighter should notify his partner to notify command
  - C. The searching firefighter should notify command after the victim has been removed
  - D. All of the above
  
8. **When performing VES, after entering the window and becoming oriented you should immediately try and shut the door to the room:**
  - A. True
  - B. False