

The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin



June 2008

Welcome to The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin!

The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin is published for members of the Comp Alliance with fire and EMS departments. The intent of this bulletin is to help our members identify and control the leading job related hazards arising from firefighting, rescue, emergency service operations and other related activities.

This issue addresses methods to reduce the risk of injury arising from hose malfunction.

The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin is written by Al Turi, Chief of Safety, (Ret.), FDNY. We thank Chief Turi for his valuable contribution to our safety efforts!

HOSE FAILURE

"Imagine that your company has just stretched their line into the interior of the structure. The line is charged and the nozzle bled. You reach the fire area, open the nozzle, and the line goes limp. The room is about to flash over. Radio traffic indicates there is a burst length. The company must make a hasty retreat to say the least. You all make it outside without any serious injuries. One member sustained a sprained ankle and another has a pulled shoulder muscle. We got away relatively lucky this time, there were no serious burn injuries".



The hose is one of the most basic fundamental tools used in the fire service. It is not often thought of as being the cause of injuries, however hose failure has resulted in numerous injuries from sprains and strains to broken bones.

Two of the most common hose failures are:

- ✓ The burst length which can result from jacket and or liner failure.
- ✓ The hose separating from the coupling.

Preventive measures:

- ✓ Keep a detailed record of the type and age of the hose. Replace hose as per manufacturer's recommendations.



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- ✓ Examine the hose after each use while repacking the bed. Look for abrasions, burns, rot, and/or mildew. Pay special attention to the point where the hose is inserted into the coupling. Any discoloration in this area may be an indication of separation.
- ✓ Periodic removal, cleaning, and examination of each hose should be conducted twice a year. This ensures that every length is inspected.
- ✓ Every hose should be pressure tested once a year. Test procedures should be in accordance with your department guidelines, NFPA, or the manufacturer's recommendations. Do not perform a test on a hose that has an obvious defect. It will most likely fail during the test and could potentially cause injuries. If a hose does have a defect, remove it from service immediately.
- ✓ Excessive pressure in hose lines should be avoided.
- ✓ Avoid excessively stretching the hose into areas of operations. This increases the tripping hazard and the friction loss resulting in higher pump pressures and the possibility of hose failure.
- ✓ Keep hose lines straight and free of kinks.
- ✓ Never attempt to straighten out kinks by increasing pressure. Remove kinks manually.

Remember the old adage: An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. If left undetected, hose failure can and will cause injuries as well as operational issues. Avoid a one alarm situation from turning into a multiple alarm emergency.

We hope you found this issue of *The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin* informative and useful. If you wish to obtain additional copies, make comments, or suggestions for future topics, please contact:

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