

Common Denominators of Fire Behavior on Tragedy Fires

- Most incidents happen on smaller fires or on isolated portions of large fires.
- Most fires are innocent in appearance before “flare-ups” or “blowups.” In some cases, tragedies occur in the mop-up stage.
- Flare-ups generally occur in deceptively light fuels.
- Fires run uphill surprisingly fast in chimneys, drainages, and on steep slopes.
- Some suppression tools, such as helicopters or air tankers, can adversely affect fire behavior. The blasts of air from low-flying helicopters and air tankers have been known to cause flare-ups.

Ten Standard Fire Fighting Orders

1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts.
2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.
3. Base all actions on current and expected fire behavior.
4. Identify escape routes and safety zones and make them known.
5. Post lookouts when there is possible danger.
6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
7. Maintain prompt communication with your forces, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.
8. Give clear instructions and ensure they are understood.
9. Maintain control of your forces at all times.
10. Fight fire aggressively, having provided for safety first.

LCES

Lookouts
Communications
Escape routes
Safety zones

“Watch-out!” Situations

1. Fire not scouted and sized-up
2. In country not seen in daylight
3. Safety zones and escape routes not identified
4. Unfamiliar with weather and local factors influencing fire behavior
5. Uninformed on strategy, tactics, and hazards
6. Instructions and assignments not clear
7. No communication link with crew members or supervisor
8. Constructing line without safe anchor point
9. Building fireline downhill with fire below
10. Attempting frontal assault on fire
11. Unburned fuel between you and fire
12. Cannot see main fire and not in contact with anyone who can
13. On a hillside where rolling material can ignite fuel below
14. Weather becoming hotter and drier
15. Wind increases or changes direction
16. Getting frequent spot fires across line
17. Terrain and fuels make escape to safety zones difficult
18. Taking nap near fireline