

FIREHOUSE®

Weekly Drill

DRILL #134: HOSE STRETCHES

Introduction

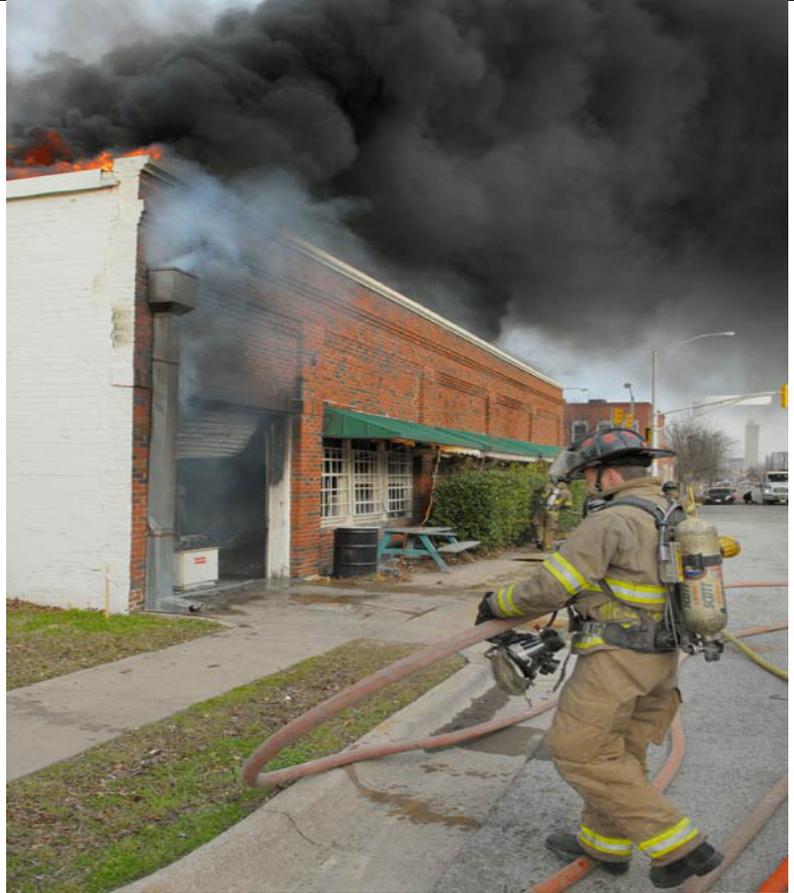
If we cannot get water on the fire, then we are not doing our job. The only effective way to get water on the fire is to stretch hoselines. I understand that there are times when the fire has advanced to the degree that a defensive operation right from the start will be the best we can do, however, our primary method of operating is to stretch hoselines to the set of the fire.

The first determination that has to be made is that of the size hoseline that will be needed to handle the incident. For the basic room and content fire, firefighters use the 1¾-inch hose. This determination is made during the size-up of the incident when the company is pulling up on location. However, having an understanding of the response district could have you making this hoseline decision before you leave the fire station. I say this because if you know the address to be in an industrial area or an area with high fire load, the 1¾-inch hose should stay on the fire truck, the 2½-inch hose should be stretched.

Once on location, the nozzle man will remove enough hose along with the nozzle to give him sufficient hose to maneuver around the fire area. This usually will be one length of hose of 50 feet. The key to a smooth operation is to have enough hose near the structure so it can be advanced as needed in support of the nozzle man. Keep in mind that too much hose can and will kink, thereby reducing the water being delivered to the nozzle.

Kinks are the enemy and it becomes every firefighter's responsibility to look for and straighten out any kinks in the hose. I cannot tell you how many times I've seen firefighters, in such a hurry to get inside, walk right past the kinked hose. Funny thing is these same firefighters are soon back looking for this kink. These kinks limit the nozzle man's advance due to the limited water being received.

Another situation that happens to the hose inside the structure is that of being cut or pitched off by a door. As the line is being advanced, interior doors are being opened. If they are not being propped or chocked open, many will close back over an uncharged hose. When the request by the nozzle man is made for water to combat the fire, an insufficient amount of water will arrive making it impossible to fight the fire and placing the



firefighters in a dangerous position. In addition, the hose acts as a wedge on the door making entry and egress difficult, if not impossible.

Another area that hinders the advancement of fire hose is when encountering a stairwell. Oftentimes firefighters will run the hose up the throat or narrow space between the stairs. Many times the hose will kink or get pinched off, restricting the flow of water. If the space is narrow, firefighters would be far better off stretching the hose up the stairs, even though it will require more hose to do so.

Anytime hose has to be advanced up an interior stairwell it becomes manpower intense and, should the fire be on floors above the third or fourth floor, time consuming. An alternative would be to drop a rope out a window on the floor below the fire and pull the hose up the exterior of the building. This method is quick and efficient and requires less manpower. In any event, a methodical size-up will assist one in making this call.

—Prepared by Russell Merrick