



**Battalion Chief Jeffrey Pindelski and Lieutenant Michael Mason**

## **Up and Out - Through the Floor Rescue with a Hoseline**

When speaking of rapid intervention on the fireground it is important to be open minded and creative in generating ideas and adding to existing concepts. Ideas and thoughts must be passed a long to give every firefighter the chance that they deserve if they encounter trouble while operating on the fireground.

Rescue of firefighters in trouble must be performed quickly and sometimes under the most hostile and adverse conditions. The question, "Why is the firefighter in trouble in the first place?", must stay in the minds of rescuers to ensure that they operate and approach the rescue in a safe manner. Case studies of firefighter fatalities must be studied and reviewed to make certain that we can avoid similar situations and cause different outcomes when faced with one of our own in trouble on the fireground.

One of the highest risks to a firefighter working on the fireground is operating on a level above the fire. The situation of a firefighter becoming trapped in a below grade situation such as a floor or stair collapse has appeared frequently in case studies of firefighter fatalities. A similar situation can also occur to a member of a ventilation crew that goes through a weakened roof into the attic space.

The easiest method to affect a rescue in a situation such as this is to enter and extract the downed firefighter through an alternate entrance / exit to the space in which they had fallen. This is more than likely not going to be possible or the most time efficient all of the time. Many techniques have been introduced and perfected to rescue a firefighter in this type of situation. The handcuff knot and modified 2:1 mechanical advantage systems are mainstays for performing a rescue in this type of situation. Another technique that we have come across in our research of rescuing firefighters that is not generally talked about is the use of the hoseline to perform a rescue of this type. An engine crew can quickly retrieve one of their members in virtually seconds if they are trained and proficient in a maneuver such as this.

If a member goes down through a weakened floor and they remain conscious and oriented, they can be rescued by simply having a bend in the hose lowered into the hole and stepping into the bend while holding the hose on each side of their body. The crew on top will then pull the hose from both sides at the same time. Once at a high enough point, the topside firefighters will grasp the downed firefighter by their S.C.B.A. straps and pull them to safety.





In cases where the downed firefighter can not stand up because of high heat conditions or injury, they can lay over the hoseline tucking it underneath their armpits locking it in with their elbows and be raised in the same manner as if they were able to stand.

If the downed firefighter is rendered unconscious, it will be necessary to send a firefighter down to effect the rescue. It may also be necessary to get a hoseline with a nozzle down to protect the downed firefighter who may now be located in a very hostile environment.

This firefighter may be lowered on a rope or can quickly slide the hoseline down to the lower level to protect his comrade. However the firefighter makes it to the lower level, it is imperative that they have some type of tag line on them for a rapid retrieval by the topside firefighters.



If the hoseline is going to be used to raise the unconscious firefighter, it will need to be placed under the downed firefighter's armpits and then crossed over behind their head above the S.C.B.A. cylinder. A truckman's belt or webbing should then be used to secure the loop tightly so that the firefighter will not slip out of the hoseline.

When performing a rescue of this nature it is important to raise the firefighter as quickly as possible because the hole in which they had fallen through may have become a blast furnace due to the conditions on the lower level. The topside firefighters need to pay close attention to the situation and surroundings. Remember, the floor or roof collapsed for a reason. Placing several firefighters into the same area around the hole may compound the problem causing further collapse. Placing ladders or doors from inside the structure around the hole can help to

distribute the weight of the firefighters performing the rescue. The hole in the floor or roof may need to be expanded to allow firefighters to enter and pull up the downed firefighter. If the hoseline is sent down into the hole with a firefighter it is also important to remember that the firefighters topside will now be without protection unless another line is stretched to their location. Calling a “Mayday” and initiating deployment of the Rapid Intervention Team immediately will be a necessity.

This maneuver is just another tool for the toolbox when considering firefighter rescue. With all techniques such as these, they will not be effective unless they are practiced on a regular basis. Regular practice will also help to foster ideas and adaptations that may be better suited for members of your department. Whenever this is the case, do your part to pass along the information to other firefighters, we are all in this together. Whenever training on skills such as this it is important to take the necessary steps to ensure that they are conducted in a safe manner that should be consistent with all other firefighter training.



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