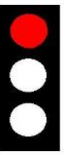





Belmont Fire Department

Standard Operating Guideline



Title: Vacant Structure Fire Response

019

Effective Date: July 1st, 2013
Supersedes SOG Dated: N/A
Number of Pages: 4
Approved By: 

PURPOSE: 019.1

016.1.1 -To provide operation guidance and fire attack action at occupancies that are identified as vacant structures.

SCOPE: 019.2

019.1.1 - All personnel.

RESPONSIBILITY: 019.3

019.3.1 – It shall be the responsibility of each member to know, understand, and utilize these guidelines as they apply to the situation at hand.

019.3.2 – It shall be the responsibility of all officers to train their subordinates in the proper application of these guidelines and to implement and enforce the use of these guidelines.

INTENT: 019.4

019.4.1 – It is the intent of this guideline to establish procedures to minimize the possibility of serious injury or death in vacant structures through the application of minimum fire attack options.

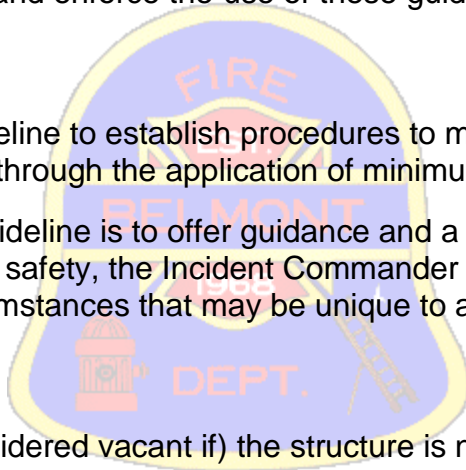
019.4.2 – While the intent of this guideline is to offer guidance and a standardized response to fires in vacant structures with emphasis on safety, the Incident Commander is granted flexibility in the application of the SOG due to circumstances that may be unique to any given incident.

DEFINITION: 019.5

019.5.1 – (A structure shall be considered vacant if) the structure is not being used for its designed purpose, is absent of a permanent occupant, and is presently unoccupied

019.4.2 – (A structure shall be considered vacant if) it has been identified by the Belmont Fire Department during biannual fire safety inspections, stakeholder complaints, or by chance during the scope of the departments normal duties.

019.4.3 – When a vacant structure is identified, the identifying department member shall complete the Belmont Fire Department Vacant Building Marking System Form in its entirety, and forward this form to his/her officer, who will document the structure in the Fire Department reporting system, and forward the form to the Fire Chiefs office. It shall be the responsibility of the officer to relay the information to all shifts at pass down, to inform everyone, due to the fact it could take up to 48 hours to have the correct markings placed on the structure, due to holidays, weekends, etc.



Belmont Fire Department

Standard Operating Guideline

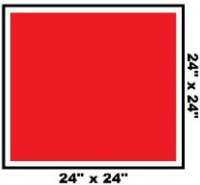
MARKING SYSTEM FOR VACANT STRUCTURES: 019.6

019.6.1 – Vacant structures shall be identified to indicate the level of known hazards that exist.

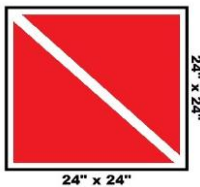
019.6.2 – The identification marking of vacant structures shall be accomplished by using high visibility 24" x 24" posted signs and/or high visibility high contrasting (red) marking paint, when it is not possible to attach/place the appropriate sign on the vacant structure.

019.6.3 – For the purpose of this SOG, structures meeting the criteria to be defined as a vacant structure shall have one of the following classifications:

019.6.3A – **Vacant structure with NO KNOWN structural compromise:** Vacant structures with no known interior hazards exist and normal firefighting operations including interior operations can be conducted when necessary shall be marked as indicated below.



019.6.3B – **Vacant structure with MINOR structural compromise:** Vacant structures where interior hazards exist to such a degree that interior operations can be conducted when necessary **ONLY** after examination and with extreme caution shall be marked as indicated below.



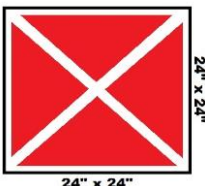
019.6.3B.1 – If offensive operations are undertaken in a vacant structure with minor structural compromise, the following actions shall be considered:

- Ventilation shall be coordinated with fire attack.
- Two means of egress shall be maintained on every floor of the structure.
- Identified hazards shall be communicated to all personnel on the scene.
- Minimal personnel should be utilized for fire control efforts within the structure.

******It is important to remember that a structure identified to have only minor compromise can, overtime deteriorate and become a structure with SEVERE compromise.******

019.6.3C – **Vacant structure with SEVERE structural compromise:** Every effort must be made to conduct operations from the exterior **ONLY** (with limited exception for civilian life safety).

Offensive operations should be conducted in situations where a viable victim is visually seen or heard and where immediate action could prevent loss of life. Immediately following and rescue attempt, all remaining firefighting action will be accomplished in a defensive mode.



Belmont Fire Department

Standard Operating Guideline

ATTACK PRECAUTIONS: 019.7

- Initial arriving companies, who observe and identify a working fire in a vacant structure, will notify dispatch upon arrival, and this information shall be repeated, giving any additional apparatus, vehicles enroute this important information.
- More time than usual should be devoted to the size up of vacant structures, and in this instance; a cautious and slower approach to conduct operations is appropriate.
- Vacant structures promote the rapid spread of fire, both vertically and horizontally. In addition; possible collapse and extension to exposures requires the rapid application of water to achieve timely fire control and extinguishment.
- The use of a minimum number of personnel should in the "HOT ZONE" which shall include the collapse zone.

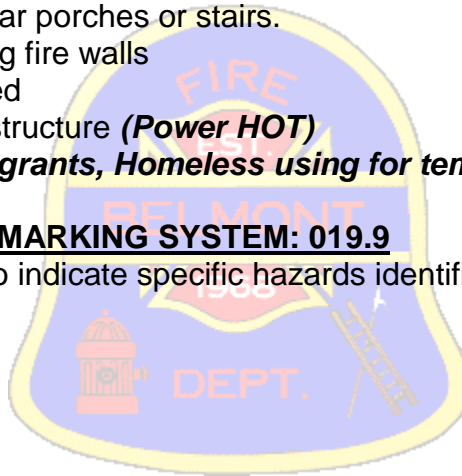
HAZARDS TO CONSIDER FOR STRUCTURES WITH STRUCTURAL COMPROMISE: 019.8

- Holes in floors
- Holes in roof
- Missing stairway(s)
- Unstable front or rear porches or stairs.
- Breached or missing fire walls
- Chimney deteriorated
- Electrical Drop on structure (**Power HOT**)
- Human Activity (**Vagrants, Homeless using for temporary shelter**)

HAZARD SYMBOLS USED WITH MARKING SYSTEM: 019.9

The following letters may be used to indicate specific hazards identified in marked vacant structures:

HA - Human Activity
F - Floor Hazards
R - Roof Hazards
W- Wall Hazards
C - Chimney Hazard
E - Electricity
S - Stair Hazards



24" x 24"

"Example"

UNMARKED: 019.10

Vacant Structures shall be approached with the same degree of extreme caution as marked structures.

Belmont Fire Department

Standard Operating Guideline

Belmont Fire Department Vacant Building Marking System

New Updated _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Address: _____

Circle Designation:  Vacant  Hazardous  Severe Hazards County Map# _____

Building Owner: _____

Building Owner Address: _____



- Building Security** Secure Open/Unsecured
- Building Construction**
Number of Floors _____
Structural Members Steel Concrete Wood
Truss Construction Yes No Roof
Exposed Structural Members Yes No
Exterior Walls Block/Brick Wood Metal Tie Rods (stars)
Openings in Exterior Walls Many Few Windowless
- Building Condition**
Interior walls Good Deteriorating Multiple holes (fire spread)
Roof Good Some Deterioration Major Deterioration
General Building Condition Good Minor deterioration Major Deterioration
Chimney Good Minor deterioration Major Deterioration
Holes In Floor No Yes (location) _____
Missing Stairs No Yes (location) _____
Open Shafts/Pits No Yes (location) _____
Signs of Human Activity No Yes (location) _____
- Hazardous Materials** No Yes What _____ Where _____
- Any Other Issues:** _____

Evaluated By _____

Approved by Chief: _____ Date _____