



**Today's discussion is from the
Fireline Safety Category.**

COMMON DENOMINATORS OF FIRE BEHAVIOR ON TRAGEDY FIRES

Five common denominators that contribute to accidents/incidents have been identified through studies of tragedy fires. It is important for firefighters to readily recognize the following common denominators so that future tragedies can be prevented:

- Most incidents happen on smaller fires or on isolated portions of larger fires.
- Most fires are innocent in appearance before unexpected shifts in wind direction and/or speed results in flare-ups or extreme fire behavior. In some cases, tragedies occur in the mop-up stage.
- Flare-ups generally occur in deceptively light fuels, such as grass and light brush.
- Fires run uphill surprisingly fast in chimneys, saddles, gullies, and on steep slopes.
- Some suppression tools, such as helicopters or airtankers, can adversely affect fire behavior. The blasts of air from low-flying helicopters and airtankers have been known to cause flare-ups.

References:

[Incident Response Pocket Guide](#) pg 4
[Fireline Handbook](#)
[Common Denominators PowerPoint](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

ONLINE | MAIL: 6 Minutes For Safety Task Group • 3833 S. Development Ave • Boise, ID 83705 | FAX: 208-387-5250

[6 Minutes Home](#)