



Today's discussion is from the
Fireline Safety Category.

FIRE SHELTER DEPLOYMENT SITE SELECTION

A primary objective of every operational fire plan is to keep firefighters out of entrapment situations. However, firefighters must always be prepared to deploy their fire shelters. The key to a successful fire shelter deployment is proper site selection. Consider the following when discussing shelter deployment site selection.

- Pick a site that will keep the fire shelter away from flames and convective heat. The site also should limit the amount of radiant heat that reaches the shelter.
- Select an area with no fuels. If that isn't possible, select a site in light fuels, such as grass, where the flaming front will pass quickly. Clear the site to mineral soil if at all possible. If time is critical, pick a site with the least fuel.
- Pick natural firebreaks (such as wet meadows; creek beds; wet, swampy areas; large rockslides with no fuels). Rough terrain in rockslides may make it difficult to seal the fire shelter to the ground.
- Areas on the lee side of ridgetops and knobs can be effective deployment sites because convective heat and flames will generally continue rising above them.
- Wide areas that have been cleared of fuel, such as dozer lines or roads, can be effective deployment sites. In larger areas, don't let truck, dozers, and other equipment occupy the best deployment sites.
- Flat areas on slopes, such as benches or road cuts, offer some protection from radiant and convective heat. Level areas like these can keep you under the path of flames and convective heat.
 - The ditch on the inside of the road, if free of fuel may be an effective deployment site on a road.
 - Consider vehicle traffic.
- Avoid areas that tend to funnel smoke, flames and hot gasses, such as:
 - Narrow draws
 - Saddles on ridgetops
 - Chimneys and chutes
- Know how long it takes to reach your safety zone. Crew supervisors should identify and communicate escape routes and safety zones.
- If you're not in a suitable shelter deployment area, keep escaping while watching for a possible deployment site.
- Ensure sites are clearly identified and marked.

References:

[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Incident Response Pocket Guide](#), pgs 22-23

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