



Today's discussion is from the
LCES (Lookouts, Communication, Escape
Routes, and Safety Zones) Category.

SAFETY ZONES (part 1)

A safety zone is a location where the threatened firefighter can find adequate refuge from an approaching fire.

- What is the difference between a safety zone and a deployment site?
 - The safety zone is the area where a firefighter can survive without using a fire shelter. The deployment site is used when fire conditions are such that escape routes and safety zones have been compromised.

- How do you identify a good safety zone?
 - Consider the distance from the escaped fire as well as topography, winds, fire behavior, and fuels in the area.
 - The best locations are usually “in the black;” those with a minimum of, or devoid of, ground/aerial vegetation; or large bodies of water.
 - Location is scouted and marked well for visibility at all times.
 - Location has been reassessed in relation to line work progress, fatigue, changes in fire behavior, and arrival of additional resources.
 - For radiant heat only, the distance separation between the firefighter and the flames must be at least four times the maximum flame height. This distance must be maintained on all sides, if the fire has ability to burn completely around the safety zone. Convective heat from wind and/or terrain influences will increase this distance requirement.
 - Take advantage of heat barriers such as lee side of ridges, large rocks, or solid structures.

What should you avoid in selecting a safety zone?

- Avoid locations that are downwind from the fire.
- Avoid locations that are in chimneys, saddles, or narrow canyons.
- Avoid locations that require a steep uphill escape route.

References:

[Fireline Handbook](#)

[Incident Response Pocket Guide](#)

[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#)
“LCES and Other Thoughts” by Paul Gleason

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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