



Today's discussion is from the  
Fireline Safety Category.

## **TERRAIN AND FUELS MAKE ESCAPE TO SAFETY ZONES DIFFICULT**

When fighting wildland fires, it is often easy to get committed to areas that put you in Watchout Situation #17. As firefighters progress along the fireline, it is imperative to constantly keep the following considerations in mind:

- Base retreat times on the slowest member of the crew.
- Does the crew's condition allow for fast travel? Discuss physical and mental conditions that could interfere with a crew's ability to travel quickly.
- Will you get adequate warning to make it to your safety zone? Who will you rely on to warn you? How will you ensure that everyone gets the word?
- Can escape routes be improved to make travel to safety zones faster? Are escape routes marked? Review what you have done on past fires to locate, mark, and improve escape routes.
- Will posting more lookouts give adequate warning? Talk about situations where there was more than one firefighter assigned to be lookout.
- To reduce the risks:
  - Consider other tactics that will allow you to be in a safer location. Review fires where you have had to change tactics because escape to safety zones was not adequate.

### References:

[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations  
Incident Response Pocket Guide](#)

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**Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.**

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